

A
T R E A T I S E
O F
Human Nature:

BEING

An ATTEMPT to introduce the ex-
perimental Method of Reasoning

I N T O

M O R A L S U B J E C T S.

by David Hume Esq.

*Dura semper virtutis amator,
Quare quid est virtus, et posce exemplar bonissi.*

LUCAN.

W I T H A N

A P P E N D I X.

Wherein some Passages of the foregoing
Volumes are illustrated and explain'd.

V O L. III.

O F

M O R A L S.

L O N D O N,

Printed for THOMAS LONGMAN, at the Ship in
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TREATISE

OF

HUMAN NATURE

RELATIVE

AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD OF REASONING

MORAL SUBJECTS

BY JAMES HUME

WITH NOTES BY JAMES HUME

APPENDIX

WHICH CONTAINS THE REMAINS OF THE LATE JAMES HUME

VOLUME III



M. A. L. S.

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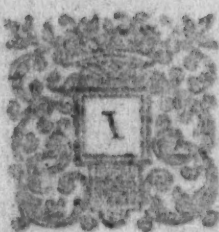
I **THINK** it proper to inform the public, that tho' this be a third volume of the Treatise of Human Nature, yet 'tis in some measure independent of the other two, and requires not that the reader shou'd enter into all the abstract reasonings contain'd in them. I am hopeful it may be understood by ordinary readers, with as little attention as is usually given to any books of reasoning. It must only be observ'd, that I continue to make use of the terms, impressions and ideas, in the same sense as formerly; and that by

A 2 impressions

ADVERTISEMENT.

impressions I mean our stronger perceptions, such as our sensations, affections and sentiments; and by ideas the fainter perceptions, or the copies of these in the memory and imagination.

THINK it proper to inform the public, that this is a third volume of the Treatise of Human Nature, of its in former volumes. I am sensible that the public will be disappointed if they expect to find in this volume any new discoveries, or any new method of reasoning. It may only be considered as a volume to make use of the former impressions and ideas, in the same sense as formerly; and that by



CON-



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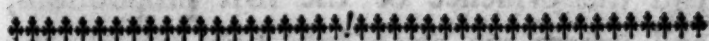
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A

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A
TREATISE
OF
Human Nature.



BOOK III.
Of MORALS.

PART I.
Of Virtue and Vice in general.

SECT. I.
Moral Distinctions not deriv'd from Reason.

 HERE is an inconvenience SECT. I.
which attends all abstruse rea-
soning, that it may silence,
without convincing an antago-
nist, and requires the same intense study to
Vol. III. B make

PART. make us sensible of its force, that was at
 I. first requisite for its invention. When we
 Of virtue
 and vice
 in general. leave our closet, and engage in the common
 affairs of life, its conclusions seem to vanish,
 like the phantoms of the night on the ap-
 pearance of the morning; and 'tis difficult
 for us to retain even that conviction, which
 we had attain'd with difficulty. This is
 still more conspicuous in a long chain of
 reasoning, where we must preserve to the
 end the evidence of the first propositions,
 and where we often lose sight of all the
 most receiv'd maxims, either of philosophy
 or common life. I am not, however, with-
 out hopes, that the present system of phi-
 losophy will acquire new force as it ad-
 vances; and that our reasonings concerning
morals will corroborate whatever has been
 said concerning the *understanding* and the
passions. Morality is a subject that interests
 us above all others: We fancy the peace of
 society to be at stake in every decision con-
 cerning it; and 'tis evident, that this concern
 must make our speculations appear more real
 and solid, than where the subject is, in a
 great measure, indifferent to us. What
 affects us, we conclude can never be a chi-
 mera; and as our passion is engag'd on the
 one side or the other, we naturally think
 that

that the question lies within human comprehension; which, in other cases of this nature, we are apt to entertain some doubt of. Without this advantage I never should have ventur'd upon a third volume of such abstruse philosophy, in an age, wherein the greatest part of men seem agreed to convert reading into an amusement, and to reject every thing that requires any considerable degree of attention to be comprehended.

S E C T.

I.

*Moral distinctions
not deriv'd
from reason.*

It has been observ'd, that nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions; and that all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking, fall under this denomination. The mind can never exert itself in any action, which we may not comprehend under the term of *perception*; and consequently that term is no less applicable to those judgments, by which we distinguish moral good and evil, than to every other operation of the mind. To approve of one character, to condemn another, are only so many different perceptions.

Now as perceptions resolve themselves into two kinds, viz. *impressions* and *ideas*, this distinction gives rise to a question, with which we shall open up our present enquiry concerning morals, *Whether 'tis by means of*

PART our ideas or impressions we distinguish be-

I. *twixt vice and virtue, and pronounce an action blameable or praise-worthy?* This will immediately cut off all loose discourses and declamations, and reduce us to something precise and exact on the present subject.

*Of virtue
and vice
in general.*

THOSE who affirm that virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason; that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them; that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation, not only on human creatures, but also on the Deity himself: All these systems concur in the opinion, that morality, like truth, is discern'd merely by ideas, and by their juxtaposition and comparison. In order, therefore, to judge of these systems, we need only consider, whether it be possible, from reason alone, to distinguish betwixt moral good and evil, or whether there must concur some other principles to enable us to make that distinction.

IF morality had naturally no influence on human passions and actions, 'twere in vain to take such pains to inculcate it; and nothing wou'd be more fruitless than that multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound. Philosophy is commonly divided

divided into *speculative* and *practical*; and as **SECT.**
morality is always comprehended under the **I.**
latter division, 'tis supposed to influence our *Moral di-*
passions and actions, and to go beyond the *stinctions*
calm and indolent judgments of the under- *not deriv'd*
standing. And this is confirm'd by common *from rea-*
experience, which informs us, that men are
often govern'd by their duties, and are de-
ter'd from some actions by the opinion of
injustice, and impell'd to others by that of
obligation.

SINCE morals, therefore, have an in-
fluence on the actions and affections, it fol-
lows, that they cannot be deriv'd from rea-
son; and that because reason alone, as we
have already prov'd, can never have any such
influence. Morals excite passions, and pro-
duce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is
utterly impotent in this particular. The
rules of morality, therefore, are not con-
clusions of our reason.

No one, I believe, will deny the justness
of this inference; nor is there any other
means of evading it, than by denying that
principle, on which it is founded. As long
as it is allow'd, that reason has no influence
on our passions and actions, 'tis in vain to
pretend, that morality is discover'd only by
a deduction of reason. An active principle

PART can never be founded on an inactive ; and

I. if reason be inactive in itself, it must remain
 so in all its shapes and appearances, whether
 it exerts itself in natural or moral subjects,
 whether it considers the powers of external
 bodies, or the actions of rational beings.

*Of virtue
 and vice
 in general.*

IT would be tedious to repeat all the arguments, by which I have prov'd,^a that reason is perfectly inert, and can never either prevent or produce any action or affection. 'Twill be easy to recollect what has been said upon that subject. I shall only recal on this occasion one of these arguments, which I shall endeavour to render still more conclusive, and more applicable to the present subject.

REASON is the discovery of truth or falshood. Truth or falshood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the *real* relations of ideas, or to *real* existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore, is not susceptible of this argeement or disagreement, is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason. Now 'tis evident our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagreement ; being original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying

^a Book II. Part III. Sect. 3.

no reference to other passions, volitions, and S E C T. I.
 actions. 'Tis impossible, therefore, they can
 be pronounced either true or false, and be
 either contrary or conformable to reason. *Moral distinctions
not deriv'd
from reason.*

THIS argument is of double advantage to
 our present purpose. For it proves *directly*,
 that actions do not derive their merit from a
 conformity to reason, nor their blame from
 a contrariety to it; and it proves the same
 truth more *indirectly*, by shewing us, that
 as reason can never immediately prevent or
 produce any action by contradicting or ap-
 proving of it, it cannot be the source of
 moral good and evil, which are found to
 have that influence. Actions may be lauda-
 ble or blameable; but they cannot be reason-
 able or unreasonable: Laudable or blameable,
 therefore, are not the same with reasonable
 or unreasonable. The merit and demerit of
 actions frequently contradict, and sometimes
 controul our natural propensities. But rea-
 son has no such influence. Moral distinctions,
 therefore, are not the offspring of reason.
 Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be
 the source of so active a principle as con-
 science, or a sense of morals. *the distinction
between*

BUT perhaps it may be said, that tho' no
 will or action can be immediately contra-
 dictory to reason, yet we may find such a
 contradiction

PART contradiction in some of the attendants of
 I. the action, that is, in its causes or effects.

*Of virtue
 and vice
 in general.*

The action may cause a judgment, or may be *obliquely* caus'd by one, when the judgment concurs with a passion; and by an abusive way of speaking, which philosophy will scarce allow of, the same contrariety may, upon that account, be ascrib'd to the action. How far this truth or falshood may be the source of morals, 'twill now be proper to consider.

IT has been observ'd, that reason, in a strict and philosophical sense, can have an influence on our conduct only after two ways: Either when it excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it; or when it discovers the connexion of causes and effects, so as to afford us means of exerting any passion. These are the only kinds of judgment, which can accompany our actions, or can be said to produce them in any manner; and it must be allow'd, that these judgments may often be false and erroneous. A person may be affected with passion, by supposing a pain or pleasure to lie in an object, which has no tendency to produce either of these sensations, or which produces the contrary to what is imagin'd. A person may also
 take

take false measures for the attaining his end, and may retard, by his foolish conduct, instead of forwarding the execution of any project. These false judgments may be thought to affect the passions and actions, which are connected with them, and may be said to render them unreasonable, in a figurative and improper way of speaking. But tho' this be acknowledg'd, 'tis easy to observe, that these errors are so far from being the source of all immorality, that they are commonly very innocent, and draw no manner of guilt upon the person who is so unfortunate as to fall into them. They extend not beyond a mistake of *fact*, which moralists have not generally suppos'd criminal, as being perfectly involuntary. I am more to be lamented than blam'd, if I am mistaken with regard to the influence of objects in producing pain or pleasure, or if I know not the proper means of satisfying my desires. No one can ever regard such errors as a defect in my moral character. A fruit, for instance, that is really disagreeable, appears to me at a distance, and thro' mistake I fancy it to be pleasant and delicious. Here is one error. I choose certain means of reaching this fruit, which are not proper for my end. Here is a second error; nor is there

SECT.
I.*Moral distinctions
not deriv'd
from reason.*

any

PART any third one, which can ever possibly enter
I. into our reasonings concerning actions. I

*Of virtue
and vice
in general.*

ask, therefore, if a man, in this situation, and guilty of these two errors, is to be regarded as vicious and criminal, however unavoidable they might have been? Or if it be possible to imagine, that such errors are the sources of all immorality?

AND here it may be proper to observe, that if moral distinctions be deriv'd from the truth or falshood of those judgments, they must take place wherever we form the judgments; nor will there be any difference, whether the question be concerning an apple or a kingdom, or whether the error be avoidable or unavoidable. For as the very essence of morality is suppos'd to consist in an agreement or disagreement to reason, the other circumstances are entirely arbitrary, and can never either bestow on any action the character of virtuous or vicious, or deprive it of that character. To which we may add, that this agreement or disagreement, not admitting of degrees, all virtues and vices wou'd of course be equal.

SHOU'D it be pretended, that tho' a mistake of *fact* be not criminal, yet a mistake of *right* often is; and that this may be the source of immorality: I would answer, that

'tis

Book III. *Of Morals.*

II

'tis impossible such a mistake can ever be the original source of immorality, since it supposes a real right and wrong; that is, a real distinction in morals, independent of these judgments. A mistake, therefore, of right may become a species of immorality; but 'tis only a secondary one, and is founded on some other, antecedent to it.

Moral distinctions not deriv'd from reason.

As to those judgments which are the effects of our actions, and which, when false, give occasion to pronounce the actions contrary to truth and reason; we may observe, that our actions never cause any judgment, either true or false, in ourselves, and that 'tis only on others they have such an influence. 'Tis certain, that an action, on many occasions, may give rise to false conclusions in others; and that a person, who thro' a window sees any lewd behaviour of mine with my neighbour's wife, may be so simple as to imagine she is certainly my own. In this respect my action resembles somewhat a lye or falshood; only with this difference, which is material, that I perform not the action with any intention of giving rise to a false judgment in another, but merely to satisfy my lust and passion. It causes, however, a mistake and false judgment by accident; and the falshood of its effects may be ascribed,

by

PART by some odd figurative way of speaking, to
I. the action itself. But still I can see no pre-
 text of reason for asserting, that the tenden-
 cy to cause such an error is the first spring or
 original source of all immorality ^a.

*Of virtue
 and vice
 in general.*

THUS upon the whole, 'tis impossible, that
 the distinction betwixt moral good and evil,
 can

^a One might think it were entirely superfluous to prove this, if a late author, who has had the good fortune to obtain some reputation, had not seriously affirmed, that such a falshood is the foundation of all guilt and moral deformity. That we may discover the fallacy of his hypothesis, we need only consider, that a false conclusion is drawn from an action, only by means of an obscurity of natural principles, which makes a cause be secretly interrupted in its operation, by contrary causes, and renders the connection betwixt two objects uncertain and variable. Now, as a like uncertainty and variety of causes take place, even in natural objects, and produce a like error in our judgment, if that tendency to produce error were the very essence of vice and immorality, it shou'd follow, that even inanimate objects might be vicious and immoral.

'Tis in vain to urge, that inanimate objects act without liberty and choice. For as liberty and choice are not necessary to make an action produce in us an erroneous conclusion, they can be, in no respect, essential to morality; and I do not readily perceive, upon this system, how they can ever come to be regarded by it. If the tendency to cause error be the origin of immorality, that tendency and immorality wou'd in every case be inseparable.

Add to this, that if I had used the precaution of shutting the windows, while I indulg'd myself in those liberties with my neighbour's wife, I should have been guilty of no immorality; and that because my action, being perfectly conceal'd, wou'd have had no tendency to produce any false conclusion.

For the same reason, a thief, who steals in by a ladder at a window, and takes all imaginable care to cause no disturbance, is in no respect criminal. For either he will not be perceiv'd, or if he be, 'tis impossible he can produce any error, nor will any one, from these circumstances, take him to be other than what he really is.

'Tis

Book III. Of Morals.

13

can be made by reason ; since that distinction SECT
has an influence upon our actions, of which I.
reason alone is incapable. Reason and judg-
ment may, indeed, be the mediate cause of
an action, by prompting, or by directing a

*Moral di-
stinctions
not deriv'd
from rea-
son.*

'Tis well known, that those who are squint-sighted, do very readily cause mistakes in others, and that we imagine they salute or are talking to one person, while they address themselves to another. Are they therefore, upon that account, immoral ?

Besides, we may easily observe, that in all those arguments there is an evident reasoning in a circle. A person who takes possession of *another's* goods, and uses them as his *own*, in a manner declares them to be his own ; and this falshood is the source of the immorality of injustice. But is property, or right, or obligation, intelligible, without an antecedent morality ?

A man that is ungrateful to his benefactor, in a manner affirms, that he never received any favours from him. But in what manner ? Is it because 'tis his duty to be grateful ? But this supposes, that there is some antecedent rule of duty and morals. Is it because human nature is generally grateful, and makes us conclude, that a man who does any harm never received any favour from the person he harm'd ? But human nature is not so generally grateful, as to justify such a conclusion. Or if it were, is an exception to a general rule in every case criminal, for no other reason than because it is an exception ?

But what may suffice entirely to destroy this whimsical system is, that it leaves us under the same difficulty to give a reason why truth is virtuous and falshood vicious, as to account for the merit or turpitude of any other action. I shall allow, if you please, that all immorality is derived from this supposed falshood in action, provided you can give me any plausible reason, why such a falshood is immoral. If you consider rightly of the matter, you will find yourself in the same difficulty as at the beginning.

This last argument is very conclusive ; because, if there be not an evident merit or turpitude annex'd to this species of truth or falshood, it can never have any influence upon our actions. For, who ever thought of forbearing any action, because others might possibly draw false conclusions from it ? Or, who ever perform'd any, that he might give rise to true conclusions ?

passion :

PART passion: But it is not pretended, that a judgment of this kind, either in its truth or falshood, is attended with virtue or vice. And as to the judgments, which are caused by our judgments, they can still less bestow those moral qualities on the actions, which are their causes.

I.
Of virtue
and vice
in general.

BUT to be more particular, and to shew, that those eternal immutable fitnesses and unfitnesses of things cannot be defended by sound philosophy, we may weigh the following considerations.

IF the thought and understanding were alone capable of fixing the boundaries of right and wrong, the character of virtuous and vicious either must lie in some relations of objects, or must be a matter of fact, which is discovered by our reasoning. This consequence is evident. As the operations of human understanding divide themselves into two kinds, the comparing of ideas, and the inferring of matter of fact; were virtue discover'd by the understanding; it must be an object of one of these operations, nor is there any third operation of the understanding, which can discover it. There has been an opinion very industriously propagated by certain philosophers, that morality is susceptible of demonstration; and tho' no one has
ever

ever been able to advance a single step in SECT.
those demonstrations; yet 'tis taken for granted, that this science may be brought to an
I.

equal certainty with geometry or algebra. Moral distinctions not deriv'd from reason.
Upon this supposition, vice and virtue must consist in some relations; since 'tis allow'd

on all hands, that no matter of fact is capable of being demonstrated. Let us, therefore, begin with examining this hypothesis, and endeavour, if possible, to fix those moral qualities, which have been so long the objects of our fruitless researches. Point out distinctly the relations, which constitute morality or obligation, that we may know wherein they consist, and after what manner we must judge of them.

IF you assert, that vice and virtue consist in relations susceptible of certainty and demonstration, you must confine yourself to those *four* relations, which alone admit of that degree of evidence; and in that case you run into absurdities, from which you will never be able to extricate yourself. For as you make the very essence of morality to lie in the relations, and as there is no one of these relations but what is applicable, not only to an irrational, but also to an inanimate object; it follows, that even such objects must be susceptible of merit or demerit.

Resem-

PART *Resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality,*

I. *and proportions in quantity and number ; all*
Of virtue these relations belong as properly to matter,
and vice as to our actions, passions, and volitions.
in general. 'Tis unquestionable, therefore, that morality

lies not in any of these relations, nor the sense of it in their discovery ^b.

SHOU'D it be asserted, that the sense of morality consists in the discovery of some relation, distinct from these, and that our enumeration was not compleat, when we comprehended all demonstrable relations under four general heads : To this I know not what to reply, till some one be so good as to point out to me this new relation. 'Tis impossible to refute a system, which has ne-

^b As a proof, how confus'd our way of thinking on this subject commonly is, we may observe, that those who assert, that morality is demonstrable, do not say, that morality lies in the relations, and that the relations are distinguishable by reason. They only say, that reason can discover such an action, in such relations, to be virtuous, and such another vicious. It seems they thought it sufficient, if they cou'd bring the word, Relation, into the proposition, without troubling themselves whether it was to the purpose or not. But here, I think, is plain argument. Demonstrative reason discovers only relations. But that reason, according to this hypothesis, discovers also vice and virtue. These moral qualities, therefore, must be relations. When we blame any action, in any situation, the whole complicated object, of action and situation, must form certain relations, wherein the essence of vice consists. This hypothesis is not otherwise intelligible. For what does reason discover, when it pronounces any action vicious ? Does it discover a relation or a matter of fact ? These questions are decisive, and must not be eluded.

Book III. *Of Morals.*

17

ver yet been explain'd. In such a manner S E C T. I.
of fighting in the dark, a man loses his
blows in the air, and often places them
where the enemy is not present. *Moral distinctions
not deriv'd
from reason.*

I M U S T, therefore, on this occasion, rest
contented with requiring the two following
conditions of any one that wou'd undertake
to clear up this system. *First*, As moral
good and evil belong only to the actions of
the mind, and are deriv'd from our situation
with regard to external objects, the rela-
tions, from which these moral distinctions
arise, must lie only betwixt internal actions,
and external objects, and must not be appli-
cable either to internal actions, compared
among themselves, or to external objects,
when placed in opposition to other external
objects. For as morality is supposed to at-
tend certain relations, if these relations cou'd
belong to internal actions consider'd singly,
it wou'd follow, that we might be guilty
of crimes in ourselves, and independent of
our situation, with respect to the universe :
And in like manner, if these moral relations
cou'd be apply'd to external objects, it wou'd
follow, that even inanimate beings wou'd be
susceptible of moral beauty and deformity.
Now it seems difficult to imagine, that any
relation can be discover'd betwixt our pas-
sions,

VOL. III.

C

PART fions, volitions and actions, compared to external objects, which relation might not belong either to these passions and volitions, or to these external objects, compar'd among themselves.

I.
*Of virtue
 and vice
 in general.*

BUT it will be still more difficult to fulfil the *second* condition, requisite to justify this system. According to the principles of those who maintain an abstract rational difference betwixt moral good and evil, and a natural fitness and unfitness of things, 'tis not only suppos'd, that these relations, being eternal and immutable, are the same, when consider'd by every rational creature, but their *effects* are also suppos'd to be necessarily the same; and 'tis concluded they have no less, or rather a greater, influence in directing the will of the deity, than in governing the rational and virtuous of our own species. These two particulars are evidently distinct. 'Tis one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it. In order, therefore, to prove, that the measures of right and wrong are eternal laws, *obligatory* on every rational mind, 'tis not sufficient to shew the relations upon which they are founded: We must also point out the connexion betwixt the relation and the will; and must prove that this connexion is so necessary,

necessary, that in every well-disposed mind, S E C T. I.
 it must take place and have its influence; I.
 tho' the difference betwixt these minds be in *Moral distinctions*
 other respects immense and infinite. Now *not deriv'd*
 besides what I have already prov'd, that even *from reason.*
 in human nature no relation can ever alone
 produce any action; besides this, I say, it
 has been shewn, in treating of the under-
 standing, that there is no connexion of cause
 and effect, such as this is suppos'd to be,
 which is discoverable otherwise than by
 experience, and of which we can pretend to
 have any security by the simple consideration
 of the objects. All beings in the universe,
 consider'd in themselves, appear entirely loose
 and independent of each other. 'Tis only
 by experience we learn their influence and
 connexion; and this influence we ought
 never to extend beyond experience.

THUS it will be impossible to fulfil the
first condition required to the system of eter-
 nal rational measures of right and wrong;
 because it is impossible to shew those rela-
 tions, upon which such a distinction may
 be founded: And 'tis as impossible to fulfil
 the *second* condition; because we cannot
 prove *a priori*, that these relations, if they
 really existed and were perceiv'd, wou'd be
 universally forcible and obligatory.

PART

I.

*Of virtue
and vice
in general.*

BUT to make these general reflections more clear and convincing, we may illustrate them by some particular instances, wherein this character of moral good or evil is the most universally acknowledged. Of all crimes that human creatures are capable of committing, the most horrid and unnatural is ingratitude, especially when it is committed against parents, and appears in the more flagrant instances of wounds and death. This is acknowledg'd by all mankind, philosophers as well as the people; the question only arises among philosophers, whether the guilt or moral deformity of this action be discover'd by demonstrative reasoning, or be felt by an internal sense, and by means of some sentiment, which the reflecting on such an action naturally occasions. This question will soon be decided against the former opinion, if we can shew the same relations in other objects, without the notion of any guilt or iniquity attending them. Reason or science is nothing but the comparing of ideas, and the discovery of their relations; and if the same relations have different characters, it must evidently follow, that those characters are not discover'd merely by reason. To put the affair, therefore, to this trial, let us chuse any inanimate object, such

such as an oak or elm; and let us suppose, SECT. I.
that by the dropping of its seed, it produces

a sapling below it, which springing up by *Moral distinctions*
not deriv'd
from rea-
son.
degrees, at last overtops and destroys the
parent tree: I ask, if in this instance there
be wanting any relation, which is discover-

able in parricide or ingratitude? Is not the
one tree the cause of the other's existence;
and the latter the cause of the destruction
of the former, in the same manner as when
a child murders his parent? 'Tis not suffi-
cient to reply, that a choice or will is want-
ing. For in the case of parricide, a will
does not give rise to any *different* relations,
but is only the cause from which the action
is deriv'd; and consequently produces the
same relations, that in the oak or elm arise
from some other principles. 'Tis a will or
choice, that determines a man to kill his
parent; and they are the laws of matter and
motion, that determine a sapling to destroy
the oak, from which it sprung. Here then
the same relations have different causes; but
still the relations are the same: And as the
discovery is not in both cases attended with
a notion of immorality, it follows, that
that notion does not arise from such a dis-
covery.

PART BUT to chuse an instance, still more re-

I. resembling; I would fain ask any one, why incest in the human species is criminal, and why the very same action, and the same relations in animals have not the smallest moral turpitude and deformity? If it be answer'd, that this action is innocent in animals, because they have not reason sufficient to discover its turpitude; but that man, being endow'd with that faculty, which *ought* to restrain him to his duty, the same action instantly becomes criminal to him; should this be said, I would reply, that this is evidently arguing in a circle. For before reason can perceive this turpitude, the turpitude must exist; and consequently is independent of the decisions of our reason, and is their object more properly than their effect. According to this system, then, every animal, that has sense, and appetite, and will; that is, every animal must be susceptible of all the same virtues and vices, for which we ascribe praise and blame to human creatures. ^{as} the difference is, that our superior reason may serve to discover the vice or virtue, and by that means may augment the blame or praise: But still this discovery supposes a separate being in these moral distinctions, and a being, which depends only on the will

will and appetite, and which, both in thought SECT.
and reality, may be distinguish'd from the I.
reason. Animals are susceptible of the same Moral di-
relations, with respect to each other, as the stinctions
human species, and therefore wou'd also be not deriv'd
susceptible of the same morality, if the from rea-
essence of morality consisted in these rela-
tions. Their want of a sufficient degree of
reason may hinder them from perceiving the
duties and obligations of morality, but can
never hinder these duties from existing; since
they must antecedently exist, in order to
their being perceiv'd. Reason must find
them, and can never produce them. This
argument deserves to be weigh'd, as being,
in my opinion, entirely decisive.

NOR does this reasoning only prove, that
morality consists not in any relations, that
are the objects of science; but if examin'd,
will prove with equal certainty, that it
consists not in any *matter of fact*, which
can be discover'd by the understanding. This
is the *second* part of our argument; and if
it can be made evident, we may conclude,
that morality is not an object of reason.
But can there be any difficulty in proving,
that vice and virtue are not matters of fact,
whose existence we can infer by reason?
Take any action allow'd to be vicious: Wil-

PART ful murder, for instance. Examine it in all

I. lights, and see if you can find that matter

*Of virtue
and vice
in general.*

of fact, or real existence, which you call

vice. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of

fact in the case. The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object.

You never can find it, till you turn your reflection into your own breast, and find a

sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter

of fact; but 'tis the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object.

So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing,

but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of

blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compar'd to

sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qua-

lities in objects, but perceptions in the mind: And this discovery in morals, like that other

in physics, is to be regarded as a considerable advancement of the speculative

sciences; tho', like that too, it has little or no influence on practice. Nothing can be

more real, or concern us more, than our

OWN

own sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness; S E C T.
and if these be favourable to virtue, and un- I.
favourable to vice, no more can be requisite
to the regulation of our conduct and be- *Moral di-*
haviour. *stinctions*
not deriv'd
from rea-
son.

I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance. In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*, expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and

PART and am persuaded, that this small attention

I. wou'd subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceiv'd by reason.

*Of virtue
and vice
in general.*

S E C T. II.

*Moral distinctions deriv'd from a
moral sense.*

THUS the course of the argument leads us to conclude, that since vice and virtue are not discoverable merely by reason, or the comparison of ideas, it must be by means of some impression or sentiment they occasion, that we are able to mark the difference betwixt them. Our decisions concerning moral rectitude and depravity are evidently perceptions; and as all perceptions are either impressions or ideas, the exclusion of the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judg'd of; tho' this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle, that we are apt to confound it with an idea, according to our common

mon custom of taking all things for the same, SECT. II.
 which have any near resemblance to each
 other.

THE next question is, Of what nature are these impressions, and after what manner do they operate upon us? Here we cannot remain long in suspense, but must pronounce the impression arising from virtue, to be agreeable, and that proceeding from vice to be uneasy. Every moment's experience must convince us of this. There is no spectacle so fair and beautiful as a noble and generous action; nor any which gives us more abhorrence than one that is cruel and treacherous. No enjoyment equals the satisfaction we receive from the company of those we love and esteem; as the greatest of all punishments is to be oblig'd to pass our lives with those we hate or contemn. A very play or romance may afford us instances of this pleasure, which virtue conveys to us; and pain, which arises from vice.

Now since the distinguishing impressions, by which moral good or evil is known, are nothing but *particular* pains or pleasures; it follows, that in all enquiries concerning these moral distinctions, it will be sufficient to shew the principles, which make us feel a satisfaction or uneasiness from the survey of any cha-

Moral distinctions deriv'd from a moral sense.

PART character, in order to satisfy us why the character is laudable or blameable. An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very *feeling* constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no farther; nor do we enquire into the cause of the satisfaction. We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous. The case is the same as in our judgments concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations. Our approbation is imply'd in the immediate pleasure they convey to us.

I HAVE objected to the system, which establishes eternal rational measures of right and wrong, that 'tis impossible to shew, in the actions of reasonable creatures, any relations, which are not found in external objects; and therefore, if morality always attended these relations, 'twere possible for inanimate matter to become virtuous, or vicious.

cious. Now it may, in like manner, be ob- S E C T. II.
 jected to the present system, that if virtue
 and vice be determin'd by pleasure and pain, *Moral distinctions deriv'd from a moral sense.*
 these qualities must, in every case, arise from
 the sensations; and consequently any object,
 whether animate or inanimate, rational or ir-

rational, might become morally good or evil, provided it can excite a satisfaction or uneasiness. But tho' this objection seems to be the very same, it has by no means the same force, in the one case as in the other. For, *first*, 'tis evident, that under the term *pleasure*, we comprehend sensations, which are very different from each other, and which have only such a distant resemblance, as is requisite to make them be express'd by the same abstract term. A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure; and what is more, their goodness is determin'd merely by the pleasure. But shall we say upon that account, that the wine is harmonious, or the music of a good flavour? In like manner an inanimate object, and the character or sentiments of any person may, both of them, give satisfaction; but as the satisfaction is different, this keeps our sentiments concerning them from being confounded, and makes us ascribe virtue to the one, and not to the other.

PART Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain,
I. which arises from characters and actions, of
 that *peculiar* kind, which makes us praise or
 condemn. The good qualities of an enemy
 are hurtful to us; but may still command
 our esteem and respect. 'Tis only when a
 character is considered in general, without
 reference to our particular interest, that it
 causes such a feeling or sentiment, as deno-
 minates it morally good or evil. 'Tis true,
 those sentiments, from interest and morals, are
 apt to be confounded, and naturally run in-
 to one another. It seldom happens, that we do
 not think an enemy vicious, and can distin-
 guish betwixt his opposition to our interest
 and real villainy or baseness. But this hinders
 not, but that the sentiments are, in them-
 selves, distinct; and a man of temper and
 judgment may preserve himself from these
 illusions. In like manner, tho' 'tis certain a
 musical voice is nothing but one that natu-
 rally gives a *particular* kind of pleasure; yet
 'tis difficult for a man to be sensible, that the
 voice of an enemy is agreeable, or to allow
 it to be musical. But a person of a *fine* ear,
 who has the command of himself, can se-
 parate these feelings, and give praise to what
 deserves it.

*Of virtue
 and vice
 in general.*

Secondly,

Book III. Of Morals.

31

Secondly, We may call to remembrance SECT. II.
the preceding system of the passions, in order to remark a still more considerable difference among our pains and pleasures. Pride and humility, love and hatred are excited, when there is any thing presented to us, that both bears a relation to the object of the passion, and produces a separate sensation related to the sensation of the passion. Now virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances. They must necessarily be plac'd either in ourselves or others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore must give rise to one of these four passions; which clearly distinguishes them from the pleasure and pain arising from inanimate objects, that often bear no relation to us: And this is, perhaps, the most considerable effect that virtue and vice have upon the human mind.

It may now be ask'd *in general*, concerning this pain or pleasure, that distinguishes moral good and evil, *From what principles is it derived, and whence does it arise in the human mind?* To this I reply, *first*, that 'tis absurd to imagine, that in every particular instance, these sentiments are produc'd by an *original* quality and *primary* constitution. For as the number of

our

PART our duties is, in a manner, infinite, 'tis im-

I. possible that our original instincts should extend to each of them, and from our very first infancy impress on the human mind all that multitude of precepts, which are contain'd in the compleatest system of ethics. Such a method of proceeding is not conformable to the usual maxims, by which nature is conducted, where a few principles produce all that variety we observe in the universe, and every thing is carry'd on in the easiest and most simple manner. 'Tis necessary, therefore, to abridge these primary impulses, and find some more general principles, upon which all our notions of morals are founded.

*Of virtue
and vice
in general.*

BUT in the *second* place, should it be ask'd, Whether we ought to search for these principles in *nature*, or whether we must look for them in some other origin? I wou'd reply, that our answer to this question depends upon the definition of the word, *Nature*, than which there is none more ambiguous and equivocal. If *nature* be oppos'd to miracles, not only the distinction betwixt vice and virtue is natural, but also every event, which has ever happen'd in the world, *excepting those miracles, on which our religion is founded*. In saying, then, that the senti-

ments

ments of vice and virtue are natural in this SECT.
sense, we make no very extraordinary discovery. II.

BUT *nature* may also be opposed to rare and unusual; and in this sense of the word, which is the common one, there may often arise disputes concerning what is natural or unnatural; and one may in general affirm, that we are not possess'd of any very precise standard, by which these disputes can be decided. Frequent and rare depend upon the number of examples we have observ'd; and as this number may gradually encrease or diminish, 'twill be impossible to fix any exact boundaries betwixt them. We may only affirm on this head, that if ever there was any thing, which cou'd be call'd natural in this sense, the sentiments of morality certainly may; since there never was any nation of the world, nor any single person in any nation, who was utterly depriv'd of them, and who never, in any instance, shew'd the least approbation or dislike of manners. These sentiments are so rooted in our constitution and temper, that without entirely confounding the human mind by disease or madness, 'tis impossible to extirpate and destroy them.

BUT *nature* may also be opposed to artifice, as well as to what is rare and unusual;

Moral distinctions deriv'd from a moral sense.

PART fual; and in this sense it may be disputed,

I. *Of virtue and vice in general.* whether the notions of virtue be natural or not. We readily forget, that the designs, and projects, and views of men are principles as necessary in their operation as heat and cold, moist and dry: But taking them to be free and entirely our own, 'tis usual for us to set them in opposition to the other principles of nature. Shou'd it, therefore, be demanded, whether the sense of virtue be natural or artificial, I am of opinion, that 'tis impossible for me at present to give any precise answer to this question. Perhaps it will appear afterwards, that our sense of some virtues is artificial, and that of others natural. The discussion of this question will be more proper, when we enter upon an exact detail of each particular vice and virtue ^a.

MEAN while it may not be amiss to observe from these definitions of *natural* and *unnatural*, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than those systems, which assert, that virtue is the same with what is natural, and vice with what is unnatural. For in the first sense of the word, Nature, as oppos'd to miracles, both vice and virtue are equally natural; and in the second sense, as oppos'd to

^a In the following discourse *natural* is also oppos'd sometimes to *civil*, sometimes to *moral*. The opposition will always discover the sense, in which it is taken.

what

what is unusual, perhaps virtue will be found S E C T.
to be the most unnatural. At least it must II.

be own'd, that heroic virtue, being as un-
usual, is as little natural as the most brutal
barbarity. As to the third sense of the word, *Moral distinctions deriv'd from a moral sense.*
'tis certain, that both vice and virtue are
equally artificial, and out of nature. For
however it may be disputed, whether the
notion of a merit or demerit in certain ac-
tions be natural or artificial, 'tis evident, that
the actions themselves are artificial, and are
perform'd with a certain design and intention;
otherwise they cou'd never be rank'd under
any of these denominations. 'Tis impossible,
therefore, that the character of natural and
unnatural can ever, in any sense, mark the
boundaries of vice and virtue.

THUS we are still brought back to our
first position, that virtue is distinguished by
the pleasure, and vice by the pain, that any
action, sentiment or character gives us by
the mere view and contemplation. This
decision is very commodious; because it re-
duces us to this simple question, *Why any
action or sentiment upon the general view or
survey, gives a certain satisfaction or unea-
siness,* in order to shew the origin of its mo-
ral rectitude or depravity, without looking
for any incomprehensible relations and qua-
lities,

PART I. *Of virtue and vice in general.* lities, which never did exist in nature, nor even in our imagination, by any clear and distinct conception. I flatter myself I have executed a great part of my present design by a state of the question, which appears to me so free from ambiguity and obscurity.



PART



PART II.

Of justice and injustice.

S E C T. I.

Justice, whether a natural or artificial virtue ?



HAVE already hinted, that our S E C T. I.
sense of every kind of virtue is

not natural ; but that there are
some virtues, that produce plea-

sure and approbation by means of an artifice or contrivance, which arises from the circumstances and necessity of mankind. Of this kind I assert *justice* to be ; and shall endeavour to defend this opinion by a short, and, I hope, convincing argument, before I examine the nature of the artifice, from which the sense of that virtue is derived.

PART

II.

*Of justice
and injus-
tice.*

'Tis evident, that when we praise any actions, we regard only the motives that produced them, and consider the actions as signs or indications of certain principles in the mind and temper. The external performance has no merit. We must look within to find the moral quality. This we cannot do directly; and therefore fix our attention on actions, as on external signs. But these actions are still considered as signs; and the ultimate object of our praise and approbation is the motive, that produc'd them.

AFTER the same manner, when we require any action, or blame a person for not performing it, we always suppose, that one in that situation shou'd be influenc'd by the proper motive of that action, and we esteem it vicious in him to be regardless of it. If we find, upon enquiry, that the virtuous motive was still powerful over his breast, tho' check'd in its operation by some circumstances unknown to us, we retract our blame, and have the same esteem for him, as if he had actually perform'd the action, which we require of him.

It appears, therefore, that all virtuous actions derive their merit only from virtuous motives, and are consider'd merely as signs
of

of those motives. From this principle I conclude, that the first virtuous motive, which bestows a merit on any action, can never be a regard to the virtue of that action, but must be some other natural motive or principle. To suppose, that the mere regard to the virtue of the action, may be the first motive, which produc'd the action, and render'd it virtuous, is to reason in a circle. Before we can have such a regard, the action must be really virtuous; and this virtue must be deriv'd from some virtuous motive: And consequently the virtuous motive must be different from the regard to the virtue of the action. A virtuous motive is requisite to render an action virtuous. An action must be virtuous, before we can have a regard to its virtue. Some virtuous motive, therefore, must be antecedent to that regard.

NOR is this merely a metaphysical subtilty; but enters into all our reasonings in common life, tho' perhaps we may not be able to place it in such distinct philosophical terms. We blame a father for neglecting his child. Why? because it shews a want of natural affection, which is the duty of every parent. Were not natural affection a duty, the care of children cou'd not be a duty; and 'twere impossible we cou'd have the duty

S E C T.

I.

Justice, whether a natural or artificial virtue?

PART in our eye in the attention we give to our
 II. offspring. In this case, therefore, all men
 suppose a motive to the action distinct from
 a sense of duty.

*Of justice
 and inju-
 stice.*

HERE is a man, that does many benevo-
 lent actions; relieves the distress'd, comforts
 the afflicted, and extends his bounty even to
 the greatest strangers. No character can be
 more amiable and virtuous. We regard these
 actions as proofs of the greatest humanity.
 This humanity bestows a merit on the ac-
 tions. A regard to this merit is, therefore, a
 secondary consideration, and deriv'd from the
 antecedent principle of humanity, which is
 meritorious and laudable.

IN short, it may be establish'd as an un-
 doubted maxim, *that no action can be vir-
 tuous, or morally good, unless there be in hu-
 man nature some motive to produce it, distinct
 from the sense of its morality.*

BUT may not the sense of morality or
 duty produce an action, without any other
 motive? I answer, It may: But this is no
 objection to the present doctrine. When
 any virtuous motive or principle is common
 in human nature, a person, who feels his
 heart devoid of that ~~motive~~, may hate him-
 self upon that account, and may perform
 the action without the motive, from a cer-
 tain

principle

tain sense of duty, in order to acquire by practice, that virtuous principle, or at least, to disguise to himself, as much as possible, his want of it. A man that really feels no gratitude in his temper, is still pleas'd to perform grateful actions, and thinks he has, by that means, fulfill'd his duty. Actions are at first only consider'd as signs of motives: But 'tis usual, in this case, as in all others, to fix our attention on the signs, and neglect, in some measure, the thing signify'd. But tho', on some occasions, a person may perform an action merely out of regard to its moral obligation, yet still this supposes in human nature some distinct principles, which are capable of producing the action, and whose moral beauty renders the action meritorious.

SECT.
I.
*Justice,
whether a
natural or
artificial
virtue?*

Now to apply all this to the present case; I suppose a person to have lent me a sum of money, on condition that it be restor'd in a few days; and also suppose, that after the expiration of the term agreed on, he demands the sum: I ask, *What reason or motive have I to restore the money?* It will, perhaps, be said, that my regard to justice, and abhorrence of villainy and knavery, are sufficient reasons for me, if I have the least grain of honesty, or sense of duty and obligation.

PART

II.

*Of justice
and inju-
stice.*

gation. And this answer, no doubt, is just and satisfactory to man in his civiliz'd state, and when train'd up according to a certain discipline and education. But in his rude and more *natural* condition, if you are pleas'd to call such a condition natural, this answer wou'd be rejected as perfectly unintelligible and sophistical. For one in that situation wou'd immediately ask you, *Wherein consists this honesty and justice, which you find in restoring a loan, and abstaining from the property of others?* It does not surely lie in the external action. It must, therefore be plac'd in the motive, from which the external action is deriv'd. This motive can never be a regard to the honesty of the action. For 'tis a plain fallacy to say, that a virtuous motive is requisite to render an action honest, and at the same time that a regard to the honesty is the motive of the action. We can never have a regard to the virtue of an action, unless the action be antecedently virtuous. No action can be virtuous, but so far as it proceeds from a virtuous motive. A virtuous motive, therefore, must precede the regard to the virtue; and 'tis impossible, that the virtuous motive and the regard to the virtue can be the same.

'Tis

'Tis requisite, then, to find some motive S E C T. I.
to acts of justice and honesty, distinct from
our regard to the honesty; and in this lies
the great difficulty. For shou'd we say, that *Justice, whether a natural or artificial virtue?*
a concern for our private interest or reputation is the legitimate motive to all honest
actions; it wou'd follow, that wherever that
concern ceases, honesty can no longer have
place. But 'tis certain, that self-love, when
it acts at its liberty, instead of engaging us
to honest actions, is the source of all injustice
and violence; nor can a man ever correct
those vices, without correcting and restraining
the *natural* movements of that appetite.

BUT shou'd it be affirm'd, that the reason
or motive of such actions is the *regard*
to publick interest, to which nothing is more
contrary than examples of injustice and dishonesty;
shou'd this be said, I wou'd propose the three
following considerations, as worthy of our attention.
First, public interest is not naturally attach'd
to the observation of the rules of justice; but is
only connected with it, after an artificial convention
for the establishment of these rules, as shall
be shewn more at large hereafter. *Secondly*,
if we suppose, that the loan was secret,
and that it is necessary for the interest of
the

PART the person, that the money be restor'd in the
 II. same manner (as when the lender wou'd
 Of justice and injustice. conceal his riches) in that case the example
 ceases, and the public is no longer interested
 in the actions of the borrower; tho' I sup-
 pose there is no moralist, who will affirm,
 that the duty and obligation ceases. *Thirdly*,
 experience sufficiently proves, that men, in
 the ordinary conduct of life, look not so far
 as the public interest, when they pay their
 creditors, perform their promises, and ab-
 stain from theft, and robbery, and injustice
 of every kind. That is a motive too remote
 and too sublime to affect the generality of
 mankind, and operate with any force in ac-
 tions so contrary to private interest as are
 frequently those of justice and common ho-
 nesty.

IN general, it may be affirm'd, that there
 is no such passion in human minds, as the
 love of mankind, merely as such, indepen-
 dent of personal qualities, of services, or of
 relation to ourself. 'Tis true, there is no
 human, and indeed no sensible, creature,
 whose happiness or misery does not, in some
 measure, affect us, when brought near to us,
 and represented in lively colours: But this
 proceeds merely from sympathy, and is no
 proof of such an universal affection to man-
 kind,

kind, since this concern extends itself beyond S E C T.
our own species. An affection betwixt the I.

sexes is a passion evidently implanted in human nature; and this passion not only appears in its peculiar symptoms, but also in inflaming every other principle of affection, and raising a stronger love from beauty, wit, kindness, than what wou'd otherwise flow from them. Were there an universal love among all human creatures, it wou'd appear after the same manner. Any degree of a good quality wou'd cause a stronger affection than the same degree of a bad quality wou'd cause hatred; contrary to what we find by experience. Men's tempers are different, and some have a propensity to the tender, and others to the rougher, affections: But in the main, we may affirm, that man in general, or human nature, is nothing but the object both of love and hatred, and requires some other cause, which by a double relation of impressions and ideas, may excite these passions. In vain wou'd we endeavour to elude this hypothesis. There are no phænomena that point out any such kind affection to men, independent of their merit, and every other circumstance. We love company in general; but 'tis as we love any other amusement. An *Englishman* in

*Justice,
whether a
natural or
artificial
virtue?*

Italy

PART *Italy* is a friend : A *Europæan* in *Cbina* ;

II.

Of justice
and inju-
stice.

and perhaps a man wou'd be belov'd as such, were we to meet him in the moon. But this proceeds only from the relation to ourselves ; which in these cases gathers force by being confined to a few persons.

IF public benevolence, therefore, or a regard to the interests of mankind, cannot be the original motive to justice, much less can *private benevolence*, or a *regard to the interests of the party concern'd*, be this motive. For what if he be my enemy, and has given me just cause to hate him ? What if he be a vicious man, and deserves the hatred of all mankind ? What if he be a miser, and can make no use of what I wou'd deprive him of ? What if he be a profligate debauchee, and wou'd rather receive harm than benefit from large possessions ? What if I be in necessity, and have urgent motives to acquire something to my family ? In all these cases, the original motive to justice wou'd fail ; and consequently the justice itself, and along with it all property, right, and obligation.

A RICH man lies under a moral obligation to communicate to those in necessity a share of his superfluities. Were private benevolence the original motive to justice, a
man

man wou'd not be oblig'd to leave others in S E C T. I.
the possession of more than he is oblig'd to give them.

At least the difference wou'd be very inconsiderable. Men generally fix their affections more on what they are possess'd of, than on what they never enjoy'd: *Justice, whether a natural or artificial virtue?*

For this reason, it wou'd be greater cruelty to dispossess a man of any thing, than not to give it him. But who will assert, that this is the only foundation of justice?

BESIDES, we must consider, that the chief reason, why men attach themselves so much to their possessions is, that they consider them as their property, and as secur'd to them inviolably by the laws of society. But this is a secondary consideration, and dependent on the preceding notions of justice and property.

A MAN's property is suppos'd to be fenc'd against every mortal, in every possible case. But private benevolence is, and ought to be, *towards the weaker in some persons, than in others: proprietor* And in many, or indeed in most persons, must absolutely fail. Private benevolence, therefore, is not the original motive of justice.

FROM all this it follows, that we have *naturally* no real or universal motive for observing the laws of equity, but the very equity and merit

PART rit of that observance; and as no action can

II.

*Of justice
and inju-
stice.*

be equitable or meritorious, where it cannot arise from some separate motive, there is here an evident sophistry and reasoning in a circle. Unless, therefore, we will allow, that nature has establish'd a sophistry, and render'd it necessary and unavoidable, we must allow, that the sense of justice and injustice is not deriv'd from nature, but arises artificially, tho' necessarily from education, and human conventions.

I SHALL add, as a corollary to this reasoning, that since no action can be laudable or blameable, without some motives or impelling passions, distinct from the sense of morals, these distinct passions must have a great influence on that sense. 'Tis according to their general force in human nature, that we blame or praise. In judging of the beauty of animal bodies, we always carry in our eye the œconomy of a certain species; and where the limbs and features observe that proportion, which is common to the species, we pronounce them handsome and beautiful. In like manner we always consider the *natural* and *usual* force of the passions, when we determine concerning vice and virtue; and if the passions depart very much from the common measures on either side,

sides, they are always disapprov'd as vicious. SECT.

A man naturally loves his children better than

his nephews, his nephews better than his

cousins, his cousins better than strangers,

where every thing else is equal. Hence arise

our common measures of duty, in preferring

the one to the other. Our sense of duty al-

ways follows the common and natural course

of our passions.

I.
Justice,
whether a
natural or
artificial
virtue?

To avoid giving offence, I must here ob-

serve, that when I deny justice to be a na-

tural virtue, I make use of the word, *natu-*

ral, only as oppos'd to *artificial*. In ano-

ther sense of the word; as no principle of

the human mind is more natural than a sense

of virtue; so no virtue is more natural than

justice. Mankind is an inventive species;

and where an invention is obvious and abso-

lutely necessary, it may as properly be said

to be natural as any thing that proceeds im-

mediately from original principles, without

the intervention of thought or reflection.

Tho' the rules of justice be *artificial*, they

are not *arbitrary*. Nor is the expression

improper to call them *Laws of Nature*; if

by natural we understand what is common

to any species, or even if we confine it to

mean what is inseparable from the species.

S E C T. II.

*Of the origin of justice and property.*S E C T.
II.

WE now proceed to examine two questions, viz. concerning the manner, in which the rules of justice are establish'd by the artifice of men; and concerning the reasons, which determine us to attribute to the observance or neglect of these rules a moral beauty and deformity. These questions will appear afterwards to be distinct. We shall begin with the former.

OF all the animals, with which this globe is peopled, there is none towards whom nature seems, at first sight, to have exercis'd more cruelty than towards man, in the numberless wants and necessities, with which she has loaded him, and in the slender means, which she affords to the relieving these necessities. In other creatures these two particulars generally compensate each other. If we consider the lion as a voracious and carnivorous animal, we shall easily discover him to be very necessitous; but if we turn

our eye to his make and temper, his agility, SECT.
his courage, his arms, and his force, we II.
shall find, that his advantages hold pro-
portion with his wants. The sheep and ox
are depriv'd of all these advantages; but

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property.*

their appetites are moderate, and their food is of easy purchase. In man alone, this unnatural conjunction of infirmity, and of necessity, may be observ'd in its greatest perfection. Not only the food, which is requir'd for his sustenance, flies his search and approach, or at least requires his labour to be produc'd, but he must be possess'd of cloaths and lodging, to defend him against the injuries of the weather; tho' to consider him only in himself, he is provided neither with arms, nor force, nor other natural abilities, which are in any degree answerable to so many necessities.

'Tis by society alone he is able to supply his defects, and raise himself up to an equality with his fellow-creatures, and even acquire a superiority above them. By society all his infirmities are compensated; and tho' in that situation his wants multiply every moment upon him, yet his abilities are still more augmented, and leave him in every respect more satisfied and happy, than 'tis possible for him, in his savage and solitary
E 2 condition,

PART condition, ever to become. When every individual person labours a-part, and only for himself, his force is too small to execute any considerable work; his labour being employ'd in supplying all his different necessities, he never attains a perfection in any particular art; and as his force and success are not at all times equal, the least failure in either of these particulars must be attended with inevitable ruin and misery. Society provides a remedy for these *three* inconveniences. By the conjunction of forces, our power is augmented: By the partition of employments, our ability encreases: And by mutual succour we are less expos'd to fortune and accidents. 'Tis by this additional *force, ability, and security*, that society becomes advantageous.

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and in-
justice.*

BUT in order to form society, 'tis requisite not only that it be advantageous, but also that men be sensible of ~~these~~ advantages; and 'tis impossible, in their wild uncultivated state, that by study and reflection alone, they should ever be able to attain this knowledge. Most fortunately, therefore, there is conjoin'd to those necessities, whose remedies are remote and obscure, another necessity, which having a present and more obvious remedy, may justly be regarded as the

the first and original principle of human SOCIETY. This necessity is no other than that

II.

natural appetite betwixt the sexes, which unites them together, and preserves their union, till a new tie takes place in their concern for their common offspring. This new concern becomes also a principle of union betwixt the parents and offspring, and forms a more numerous society; where the parents govern by the advantage of their superior strength and wisdom, and at the same time are restrain'd in the exercise of their authority by that natural affection, which they bear their children. In a little time, custom and habit operating on the tender minds of the children, makes them sensible of the advantages, which they may reap from society, as well as fashions them by degrees for it, by rubbing off those rough corners and untoward affections, which prevent their coalition.

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origin of
justice and
property.*

FOR it must be confest, that however the circumstances of human nature may render an union necessary, and however those passions of lust and natural affection may seem to render it unavoidable; yet there are other particulars in our *natural temper*, and in our *outward circumstances*, which are very incommodious, and are even contrary to the

PART requisite conjunction. Among the former,
 II. we may justly esteem our *selfishness* to be
 Of justice the most considerable. I am sensible, that,
 and in-justice. generally speaking, the representations of
 this quality have been carried much too far;
 and that the descriptions, which certain philo-
 sophers delight so much to form of man-
 kind in this particular, are as wide of na-
 ture as any accounts of monsters, which we
 meet with in fables and romances. So far
 from thinking, that men have no affection
 for any thing beyond themselves, I am of
 opinion, that tho' it be rare to meet with
 one, who loves any single person better than
 himself; yet 'tis as rare to meet with one,
 in whom all the kind affections, taken to-
 gether, do not over-balance all the selfish.
 Consult common experience: Do you not
 see, that tho' the whole expence of the fa-
 mily be generally under the direction of the
 master of it, yet there are few that do not
 bestow the largest part of their fortunes on
 the pleasures of their wives, and the educa-
 tion of their children, reserving the smallest
 portion for their own proper use and enter-
 tainment. This is what we may observe
 concerning such as have those endearing
 ties; and may presume, that the case would
 be

be the same with others, were they plac'd in SECT.
a like situation. II.

BUT tho' this generosity must be acknow-
ledg'd to the honour of human nature, we
may at the same time remark, that so noble
an affection, instead of fitting men for large
societies, is almost as contrary to them, as the
most narrow selfishness. For while each
person loves himself better than any other
single person, and in his love to others bears
the greatest affection to his relations and ac-
quaintance, this must necessarily produce
an opposition of passions, and a consequent
opposition of actions; which cannot but be
dangerous to the new-establish'd union.

'TIS however worth while to remark,
that this contrariety of passions wou'd be
attended with but small danger, did it not
concur with a peculiarity in our *outward cir-
cumstances*, which affords it an opportunity
of exerting itself. There are three different
species of goods, which we are possess'd of;
the internal satisfaction of our minds, the
external advantages of our body, and the
enjoyment of such possessions as we have
acquir'd by our industry and good fortune.
We are perfectly secure in the enjoyment of
the first. The second may be ravish'd from
us, but can be of no advantage to him who

PART II. *Of justice and injustice.* deprives us of them. The last only are both expos'd to the violence of others, and may be transferr'd without suffering any loss or alteration; while at the same time, there is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one's desires and necessities. As the improvement, therefore, of these goods is the chief advantage of society, so the *instability* of their possession, along with their *scarcity*, is the chief impediment.

IN vain shou'd we expect to find, in *uncultivated nature*, a remedy to this inconvenience; or hope for any inartificial principle of the human mind, which might controul those partial affections, and make us overcome the temptations arising from our circumstances. The idea of justice can never serve to this purpose, or be taken for a natural principle, capable of inspiring men with an equitable conduct towards each other. That virtue, as it is now understood, wou'd never have been dream'd of among rude and savage men. For the notion of injury or injustice implies an immorality or vice committed against some other person: And as every immorality is deriv'd from some defect or unsoundness of the passions, and as this defect must be judg'd of, in a great measure, from the ordinary course of nature in the

the constitution of the mind; 'twill be easy to know, whether we be guilty of any immorality, with regard to others, by considering the natural, and usual force of those several affections, which are directed towards them. Now it appears, that in the original frame of our mind, our strongest attention is confin'd to ourselves; our next is extended to our relations and acquaintance; and 'tis only the weakest which reaches to strangers and indifferent persons. This partiality, then, and unequal affection, must not only have an influence on our behaviour and conduct in society, but even on our ideas of vice and virtue; so as to make us regard any remarkable transgression of such a degree of partiality, either by too great an enlargement, or contraction of the affections, as vicious and immoral. This we may observe in our common judgments concerning actions, where we blame a person, who either centers all his affections in his family, or is so regardless of them, as, in any opposition of interest, to give the preference to a stranger, or mere chance acquaintance. From all which it follows, that our natural uncultivated ideas of morality, instead of providing a remedy for the partiality of our affections, do rather conform themselves to

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that

PART that partiality, and give it an additional force
 II. and influence.

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 and in-
 justice.*

THE remedy, then, is not deriv'd from nature, but from *artifice*; or more properly speaking, nature provides a remedy in the judgment and understanding, for what is irregular and incommodious in the affections. For when men, from their early education in society, have become sensible of the infinite advantages that result from it, and have besides acquir'd a new affection to company and conversation; and when they have observ'd, that the principal disturbance in society arises from those goods, which we call external, and from their looseness and easy transition from one person to another; they must seek for a remedy, by putting these goods, as far as possible, on the same footing with the fix'd and constant advantages of the mind and body. This can be done after no other manner, than by a convention enter'd into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry. By this means, every one knows what he may safely possess; and the passions are restrain'd in their partial and contradictory

ctory motions. Nor is such a restraint con- S E C T.
trary to these passions ; for if so, it cou'd II.
never be enter'd into, nor maintain'd ; but *Of the ori-*
it is only contrary to their heedless and im- *gin of ju-*
petuous movement. Instead of departing *stice and*
property.

from our own interest, or from that of our nearest friends, by abstaining from the possessions of others, we cannot better consult both these interests, than by such a convention ; because it is by that means we maintain society, which is so necessary to their well-being and subsistence, as well as to our own.

THIS convention is not of the nature of a *promise* : For even promises themselves, as we shall see afterwards, arise from human conventions. It is only a general sense of common interest ; which sense all the members of the society express to one another, and which induces them to regulate their conduct by certain rules. I observe, that it will be for my interest to leave another in the possession of his goods, *provided* he will act in the same manner with regard to me. He is sensible of a like interest in the regulation of his conduct. When this common sense of interest is mutually express'd, and is known to both, it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour. And this may properly enough be call'd a convention or agreement betwixt

PART betwixt us, tho' without the interposition of
II. a promise; since the actions of each of us
 have a reference to those of the other, and
 are perform'd upon the supposition, that
 something is to be perform'd on the other
 part. Two men, who pull the oars of a
 boat, do it by an agreement or convention,
 tho' they have never given promises to each
 other. Nor is the rule concerning the sta-
 bility of possession the less deriv'd from hu-
 man conventions, that it arises gradually, and
 acquires force by a slow progression, and by
 our repeated experience of the inconveni-
 ences of transgressing it. On the contrary,
 this experience assures us still more, that the
 sense of interest has become common to all
 our fellows, and gives us a confidence of the
 future regularity of their conduct: And 'tis
 only on the expectation of this, that our
 moderation and abstinence are founded. In
 like manner are languages gradually esta-
 blish'd by human conventions without any
 promise. In like manner do gold and silver
 become the common measures of exchange,
 and are esteem'd sufficient payment for what
 is of a hundred times their value.

AFTER this convention, concerning ab-
 stinence from the possessions of others, is
 enter'd into, and every one has acquir'd

a stability in his possessions, there immediately arise the ideas of justice and injustice; as also those of *property*, *right*, and *obligation*. The latter are altogether unintelligible without first understanding the former. Our property is nothing but those goods, whose constant possession is establish'd by the laws of society; that is, by the laws of justice. Those, therefore, who make use of the words *property*, or *right*, or *obligation*, before they have explain'd the origin of justice, or even make use of it in that explication, are guilty of a very gross fallacy, and can never reason upon any solid foundation. A man's property is some object related to him. This relation is not natural, but moral, and founded on justice. 'Tis very preposterous, therefore, to imagine, that we can have any idea of property, without fully comprehending the nature of justice, and shewing its origin in the artifice and contrivance of men. The origin of justice explains that of property. The same artifice gives rise to both. As our first and most natural sentiment of morals is founded on the nature of our passions, and gives the preference to ourselves and friends, above strangers; 'tis impossible there can be naturally any such thing as a fix'd right or property,

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PART perty, while the opposite passions of men
 II. impel them in contrary directions, and are
 not restrain'd by any convention or agree-
 ment.

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 stice.*

No one can doubt, that the convention for the distinction of property, and for the stability of possession, is of all circumstances the most necessary to the establishment of human society, and that after the agreement for the fixing and observing of this rule, there remains little or nothing to be done towards settling a perfect harmony and concord. All the other passions, beside this of interest, are either easily restrain'd, or are not of such pernicious consequence, when indulg'd. *Vanity* is rather to be esteem'd a social passion, and a bond of union among men. *Pity* and *love* are to be consider'd in the same light. And as to *envy* and *revenge*, tho' pernicious, they operate only by intervals, and are directed against particular persons, whom we consider as our superiors or enemies. This avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, is insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly destructive of society. There scarce is any one, who is not actuated by it; and there is no one, who has not reason to fear from it, when it acts without
 any

any restraint, and gives way to its first and S E C T.
 most natural movements. So that upon the II.
 whole, we are to esteem the difficulties in *Of the ori-*
 the establishment of society, to be greater or *gin of ju-*
 less, according to those we encounter in re- *stice and*
 gulating and restraining this passion. *property.*

'Tis certain, that no affection of the human mind has both a sufficient force, and a proper direction to counter-balance the love of gain, and render men fit members of society, by making them abstain from the possessions of others. Benevolence to strangers is too weak for this purpose; and as to the other passions, they rather inflame this avidity, when we observe, that the larger our possessions are, the more ability we have of gratifying all our appetites. There is no passion, therefore, capable of controlling the interested affection, but the very affection it self, by an alteration of its direction. Now this alteration must necessarily take place upon the least reflection; since 'tis evident, that the passion is much better satisfy'd by its restraint, than by its liberty, and that, *by* preserving society, we make much greater advances in the acquiring possessions, than *in, by running into* the solitary and forlorn condition, which must follow upon violence and an universal licence. The question, therefore, concerning

PART II. ing the wickedness or goodness of human nature, enters not in the least into that other question concerning the origin of society; nor is there any thing to be consider'd but the degrees of men's sagacity or folly. For whether the passion of self-interest be esteem'd vicious or virtuous, 'tis all a case; since itself alone restrains it: So that if it be virtuous, men become social by their virtue; if vicious, their vice has the same effect.

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justice.*

Now as 'tis by establishing the rule for the stability of possession, that this passion restrains itself; if that rule be very abstruse, and of difficult invention; society must be esteem'd, in a manner, accidental, and the effect of many ages. But if it be found, that nothing can be more simple and obvious than that rule; that every parent, in order to preserve peace among his children, must establish it; and that these first rudiments of justice must every day be improv'd, as the society enlarges: If all this appear evident, as it certainly must, we may conclude, that it is utterly impossible for men to remain any considerable time in that savage condition, which precedes society; but that his very first state and situation may justly be esteem'd social. This, however, hinders not, but that philosophers may, if they please, extend

extend their reasoning to the suppos'd *state of* S E C T.
nature ; provided they allow it to be a mere II.
philosophical fiction, which never had, and *Of the ori-*
never cou'd have any reality. Human *gin of ju-*
nature being compos'd of two principal *stice and*
parts, which are requisite in all its actions, *property.*
the affections and understanding ; 'tis cer-
tain, that the blind motions of the former,
without the direction of the latter, incapa-
citate men for society : And it may be al-
low'd us to consider separately the effects,
that result from the separate operations of
these two component parts of the mind.
The same liberty may be permitted to mo-
ral, which is allow'd to natural philosophers ;
and 'tis very usual with the latter to consider
any motion as compounded and consisting
of two parts separate from each other, tho'
at the same time they acknowledge it to be
in itself uncompound and inseparable.

THIS *state of nature*, therefore, is to be
regarded as a mere fiction, not unlike that
of the *golden age*, which poets have inven-
ted ; only with this difference, that the for-
mer is describ'd as full of war, violence and
injustice ; whereas the latter is painted out
to us, as the most charming and most peace-
able condition, that can possibly be ima-
gin'd. The seasons, in that first age of na-

PART II. *Of justice and injustice.* nature, were so temperate, if we may believe the poets, that there was no necessity for men to provide themselves with cloaths and houses as a security against the violence of heat and cold. The rivers flow'd with wine and milk : The oaks yielded honey ; and nature spontaneously produc'd her greatest delicacies. Nor were these the chief advantages of that happy age. The storms and tempests were not alone remov'd from nature ; but those more furious tempests were unknown to human breasts, which now cause such uproar, and engender such confusion. Avarice, ambition, cruelty, selfishness, were never heard of : Cordial affection, compassion, sympathy, were the only movements, with which the human mind was yet acquainted. Even the distinction of *mine* and *thine* was banish'd from that happy race of mortals, and carry'd with them the very notions of property and obligation, justice and injustice.

THIS, no doubt, is to be regarded as an idle fiction ; but yet deserves our attention, because nothing can more evidently shew the origin of those virtues, which are the subjects of our present enquiry. I have already observ'd, that justice takes its rise from human conventions ; and that these are intended

tended as a remedy to some inconveniences, S E C T. II.
 which proceed from the concurrence of cer-
 tain *qualities* of the human mind with the

situation of external objects. The qualities *Of the origin of justice and property.*
 of the mind are *selfishness* and *limited gene-
 rosity* : And the situation of external objects

is their *easy change*, join'd to their *scarcity* in comparison of the wants and desires of men. But however philosophers may have been bewilder'd in those speculations, poets have been guided more infallibly, by a certain taste or common instinct, which in most kinds of reasoning goes farther than any of that art and philosophy, with which we have been yet acquainted. They easily perceiv'd, if every man had a tender regard for another, or if nature supplied abundantly all our wants and desires, that the jealousy of interest, which justice supposes, could no longer have place ; nor would there be any occasion for those distinctions and limits of property and possession, which at present are in use among mankind. Encrease to a sufficient degree the benevolence of men, or the bounty of nature, and you render justice useless, by supplying its place with much nobler virtues, and more valuable blessings. The selfishness of men is animated by the few possessions we have, in propor-

PART tion to our wants; and 'tis to restrain this

II. selfishness, that men have been oblig'd to
 separate themselves from the community,
 and to distinguish betwixt their own goods
 and those of others.

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 and inju-
 stice.*

NOR need we have recourse to the fictions of poets to learn this; but beside the reason of the thing, may discover the same truth by common experience and observation. 'Tis easy to remark, that a cordial affection renders all things common among friends; and that married people in particular mutually lose their property, and are unacquainted with the *mine* and *thine*, which are so necessary, and yet cause such disturbance in human society. The same effect arises from any alteration in the circumstances of mankind; as when there is such a plenty of any thing as satisfies all the desires of men: In which case the distinction of property is entirely lost, and every thing remains in common. This we may observe with regard to air and water, tho' the most valuable of all external objects; and may easily conclude, that if men were supplied with every thing in the same abundance, or if *every one* had the same affection and tender regard for *every one* as for himself; justice and injustice would be equally unknown among mankind.

NOB

HERE

HERE then is a proposition, which, I SECT.
 think, may be regarded as certain, *that 'tis* II.
only from the selfishness and confin'd generosity ^{Of the}
of men, along with the scanty provision nature ^{origin of}
has made for his wants, that justice derives ^{justice and}
its origin. ^{property.} If we look backward we shall
 find, that this proposition bestows an addi-
 tional force on some of those observations,
 which we have already made on this
 subject.

First, we may conclude from it, that a
 regard to public interest, or a strong exten-
 sive benevolence, is not our first and original
 motive for the observation of the rules of
 justice; since 'tis allow'd, that if men were
 endow'd with such a benevolence, these rules
 would never have been dreamt of.

Secondly, we may conclude from the same
 principle, that the sense of justice is not
 founded on reason, or on the discovery of
 certain connexions and relations of ideas,
 which are eternal, immutable, and univer-
 sally obligatory. For since it is confest, that
 such an alteration as that above-mention'd,
 in the temper and circumstances of mankind,
 wou'd entirely alter our duties and obligations,
 'tis necessary upon the common system, *that the*
sense of virtue is deriv'd from reason, to shew

PART the change which this must produce in the

II. relations and ideas. But 'tis evident, that
*Of justice
and inju-
stice.* the only cause, why the extensive generosity

of man, and the perfect abundance of every thing, wou'd destroy the very idea of justice, is because they render it useless; and that, on the other hand, his confin'd benevolence, and his necessitous condition, give rise to that virtue, only by making it requisite to the publick interest, and to that of every individual. 'Twas therefore a concern for our own, and the publick interest, which made us establish the laws of justice; and nothing can be more certain, than that it is not any relation of ideas, which gives us this concern, but our impressions and sentiments, without which every thing in nature is perfectly indifferent to us, and can never in the least affect us. The sense of justice, therefore, is not founded on our ideas, but on our impressions.

Thirdly, we may farther confirm the foregoing proposition, *that those impressions, which give rise to this sense of justice, are not natural to the mind of man, but arise from artifice and human conventions.* For since any considerable alteration of temper and circumstances destroys equally justice and injustice; and since such an alteration has an effect

effect only by changing our own and the publick interest ; it follows, that the first

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establisment of the rules of justice depends on these different interests. But if men pursu'd the publick interest naturally, and with

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a hearty affection, they wou'd never have dream'd of restraining each other by these rules ; and if they pursu'd their own interest, without any precaution, they wou'd run head-long into every kind of injustice and violence. These rules, therefore, are artificial, and seek their end in an oblique and indirect manner ; nor is the interest, which gives rise to them, of a kind that cou'd be pursu'd by the natural and inartificial passions of men.

To make this more evident, consider, that tho' the rules of justice are establish'd merely by interest, their connexion with interest is somewhat singular, and is different from what may be observ'd on other occasions. A single act of justice is frequently contrary to *public interest* ; and were it to stand alone, without being follow'd by other acts, may, in itself, be very prejudicial to society. When a man of merit, of a beneficent disposition, restores a great fortune to a miser, or a seditious bigot, he has acted justly and laudably, but the public is a real sufferer. Nor is

PART every single act of justice, consider'd apart,
 II. more conducive to private interest, than to
 Of justice and injustice. public ; and 'tis easily conceiv'd how a man
 may impoverish himself by a signal instance
 of integrity, and have reason to wish, that
 with regard to that single act, the laws of
 justice were for a moment suspended in the
 universe. But however single acts of ju-
 stice may be contrary, either to public or
 private interest, 'tis certain, that the whole
 plan or scheme is highly conducive, or in-
 deed absolutely requisite, both to the support
 of society, and the well-being of every in-
 dividual. 'Tis impossible to separate the
 good from the ill. Property must be stable,
 and must be fix'd by general rules. Tho'
 in one instance the public be a sufferer, this
 momentary ill is amply compensated by the
 steady prosecution of the rule, and by the
 peace and order, which it establishes in so-
 ciety. And even every individual person
 must find himself a gainer, on ballancing
 the account ; since, without justice, society
 must immediately dissolve, and every one
 must fall into that savage and solitary con-
 dition, which is infinitely worse than the
 worst situation that can possibly be suppos'd
 in society. When therefore men have had
 experience enough to observe, that whatever
 may

may be the consequence of any single act of S E C T. II.
justice, perform'd by a single person, yet

the whole system of actions, concurr'd in by the whole society, is infinitely advantageous to the whole, and to every part ; it is not long before justice and property take place.

Every member of society is sensible of this interest : Every one expresses this sense to his fellows, along with the resolution he has taken of squaring his actions by it, on condition that others will do the same. No more is requisite to induce any one of them to perform an act of justice, who has the first opportunity. This becomes an example to others. And thus justice establishes itself by a kind of convention or agreement ; that is, by a sense of interest, suppos'd to be common to all, and where every single act is perform'd in expectation that others are to perform the like. Without such a convention, no one wou'd ever have dream'd, that there was such a virtue as justice, or have been induc'd to conform his actions to it. Taking any single act, my justice may be pernicious in every respect ; and 'tis only upon the supposition, that others are to imitate my example, that I can be induc'd to embrace that virtue ; since nothing but this combination can render justice advantageous.

or

PART or afford me any motives to conform my self
II. to its rules.

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and in-
justice.*

WE come now to the *second* question we propos'd, viz. *Why we annex the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice.* This question will not detain us long after the principles, which we have already establish'd. All we can say of it at present will be dispatch'd in a few words: And for farther satisfaction, the reader must wait till we come to the *third* part of this book. The *natural* obligation to justice, viz. interest, has been fully explain'd; but as to the *moral* obligation, or the sentiment of right and wrong, 'twill first be requisite to examine the natural virtues, before we can give a full and satisfactory account of it.

AFTER men have found by experience, that their selfishness and confin'd generosity, acting at their liberty, totally incapacitate them for society; and at the same time have observ'd, that society is necessary to the satisfaction of those very passions, they are naturally induc'd to lay themselves under the restraint of such rules, as may render their commerce more safe and commodious. To the imposition then, and observance of these rules, both in general, and in every particular

lar instance, they are at first ~~induc'd~~ only SECT. *mov'd*
by a regard to interest; and this motive, on II.
the first formation of society, is sufficiently *Of the ori-*
strong and forcible. But when society has *gin of ju-*
become numerous, and has encreas'd to a *stice and*
property.
tribe or nation, this interest is more remote;
nor do men so readily perceive, that disorder and confusion follow upon every breach of these rules, as in a more narrow and contracted society. But tho' in our own actions we may frequently lose sight of that interest, which we have in maintaining order, and may follow a lesser and more present interest, we never fail to observe the prejudice we receive, either mediately or immediately, from the injustice of others; as not being in that case either blinded by passion, or byass'd by any contrary temptation. Nay when the injustice is so distant from us, as no way to affect our interest, it still displeases us; because we consider it as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one that approaches the person guilty of it. We partake of their uneasiness by *sympathy*; and as every thing, which gives uneasiness in human actions, upon the general survey, is call'd Vice, and whatever produces satisfaction, in the same manner, is denominated Virtue; this is the reason why the sense of moral good and evil follows upon justice and injustice. And tho' this sense, in
the

PART. the present case, be deriv'd only from con-

III

*Of justice
and in-
justice.*

templating the actions of others, yet we fail not to extend it even to our own actions. The general rule reaches beyond those instances, from which it arose; while at the same time we naturally sympathize with others in the sentiments they entertain of us. Thus self-interest is the original motive to the establishment of justice: but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation, which attends that virtue.

^ This latter principle of Sympathy is too weak to controul our passions; but has sufficient force to influence our Taste, and give us the Sentiments of Approbation or Blame.

Tho' this progress of the sentiments be natural, and even necessary, 'tis certain, that it is here forwarded by the artifice of politicians, who, in order to govern men more easily, and preserve peace in human society, have endeavour'd to produce an esteem for justice, and an abhorrence of injustice. This, no doubt, must have its effect; but nothing can be more evident, than that the matter has been carry'd too far by certain writers on morals, who seem to have employ'd their utmost efforts to extirpate all sense of virtue from among mankind. Any artifice of politicians may assist nature in the producing of those sentiments, which she suggests to us, and may even on some occasions, produce alone an approbation or esteem for any particular action; but 'tis impossible it should be the sole cause of the distinction we make betwixt vice and virtue.

For

For if nature did not aid us in this particular, 'twou'd be in vain for politicians to talk of *honourable* or *dishonourable*, *praiseworthy* or *blameable*. These words wou'd be perfectly unintelligible, and wou'd no more have any idea annex'd to them, than if they were of a tongue perfectly unknown to us. The utmost politicians can perform, is, to extend the natural sentiments beyond their original bounds; but still nature must furnish the materials, and give us some notion of moral distinctions.

SECT.
II.
Of the origin of justice and property.

As publick praise and blame encrease our esteem for justice; so private education and instruction contribute to the same effect. For as parents easily observe, that a man is the more useful, both to himself and others, the greater degree of probity and honour he is endow'd with; and that those principles have greater force, when custom and education assist interest and reflection: For these reasons they are induc'd to inculcate on their children, from their earliest infancy, the principles of probity, and teach them to regard the observance of those rules, by which society is maintain'd, as worthy and honourable, and their violation as base and infamous. By this means the sentiments of honour may take root in their tender minds,
and

PART and acquire such firmness and solidity, that
 II. they may fall little short of those principles,
 which are the most essential to our natures,
 and the most deeply radicated in our internal constitution.

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and injustice.*

WHAT farther contributes to encrease their solidity, is the interest of our reputation, after the opinion, *that a merit or demerit attends justice or injustice*, is once firmly establish'd among mankind. There is nothing, which touches us more nearly than our reputation, and nothing on which our reputation more depends than our conduct, with relation to the property of others. For this reason, every one, who has any regard to his character, or who intends to live on good terms with mankind, must fix an inviolable law to himself, never, by any temptation, to be induc'd to violate those principles, which are essential to a man of probity and honour.

I SHALL make only one observation before I leave this subject, *viz.* that tho' I assert, that in the *state of nature*, or that imaginary state, which preceded society, there be neither justice nor injustice, yet I assert not, that it was allowable, in such a state, to violate the property of others. I only maintain, that there was no such thing as property; and consequently cou'd be no such thing

thing as justice or injustice. I shall have oc- S E C T.
 casion to make a similar reflection with re- II.
 gard to *promises*, when I come to treat of *Of the ori-*
 them; and I hope this reflection, when duly *gin of ju-*
 weigh'd, will suffice to remove all odium *stice and*
 from the foregoing opinions, with regard to *property.*
 justice and injustice.

S E C T. III.

*Of the rules, which determine
 property.*

TH O' the establishment of the rule, S E C T.
 concerning the stability of possession, III.
 be not only useful, but even absolutely ne- ~~~~~
 cessary to human society, it can never serve
 to any purpose, while it remains in such ge-
 neral terms. Some method must be shewn,
 by which we may distinguish what particular
 goods are to be assign'd to each particular per-
 son, while the rest of mankind are excluded
 from their possession and enjoyment. Our
 next business, then, must be to discover the
 reasons which modify this general rule, and
 fit it to the common use and practice of the
 world.

'Tis obvious, that those reasons are not
 deriv'd from any utility or advantage, which
 either

PART either the *particular* person or the public
II. may reap from his enjoyment of any *parti-*
Of justice *cular* goods, beyond what wou'd result from
and inju- the possession of them by any other person.
stice.

'Twere better, no doubt, that every one were possess'd of what is most suitable to him, and proper for his use : But besides, that this relation of fitness may be common to several at once, 'tis liable to so many controversies, and men are so partial and passionate in judging of these controversies, that such a loose and uncertain rule wou'd be absolutely incompatible with the peace of human society. The convention concerning the stability of possession is enter'd into, in order to cut off all occasions of discord and contention ; and this end wou'd never be attain'd, were we allow'd to apply this rule differently in every particular case, according to every particular utility, which might be discover'd in such an application. Justice, in her decisions, never regards the fitness or unfitness of objects to particular persons, but conducts herself by more extensive views. Whether a man be generous, or a miser, he is equally well receiv'd by her, and obtains with the same facility a decision in his favours, even for what is entirely useless to him.

It

It follows, therefore, that the general SECT. III.
rule, that possession must be stable, is not ap-
 ply'd by particular judgments, but by other
 general rules, which must extend to the
 whole society, and be inflexible either by
 spite or favour. To illustrate this, I propose
 the following instance. I first consider men
 in their savage and solitary condition; and
 suppose, that being sensible of the misery of
 that state, and foreseeing the advantages that
 wou'd result from society, they seek each
 other's company, and make an offer of mu-
 tual protection and assistance. I also sup-
 pose, that they are endow'd with such saga-
 city as immediately to perceive, that the chief
 impediment to this project of society and
 partnership lies in the avidity and selfishness
 of their natural temper; to remedy which,
 they enter into a convention for the stability
 of possession, and for mutual restraint and
 forbearance. I am sensible, that this me-
 thod of proceeding is not altogether natural;
 but besides that I here only suppose those
 reflections to be form'd at once, which in fact
 arise insensibly and by degrees; besides this,
 I say, 'tis very possible, that several persons,
 being by different accidents separated from
 the societies, to which they formerly be-
 long'd, may be oblig'd to form a new society

*Of the
 rules,
 which de-
 termine
 property.*

PART among themselves; in which case they are
 II. entirely in the situation above-mention'd.

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 and inju-
 stice.*

'Tis evident, then, that their first difficulty, in this situation, after the general convention for the establishment of society, and for the constancy of possession, is, how to separate their possessions, and assign to each his particular portion, which he must for the future inalterably enjoy. This difficulty will not detain them long; but it must immediately occur ~~to them~~, as the most natural expedient, that every one continue to enjoy what he is at present master of, and that property or constant possession be conjoin'd to the immediate possession. Such is the effect of custom, that it not only reconciles us to any thing we have long enjoy'd, but even gives us an affection for it, and makes us prefer it to other objects, which may be more valuable, but are less known to us. What has long lain under our eye, and has often been employ'd to our advantage, *that* we are always the most unwilling to part with; but can easily live without possessions, which we never have enjoy'd, and are not accusom'd to. 'Tis evident, therefore, that men wou'd easily acquiesce in this expedient, *that every one continue to enjoy what he is at present possess'd of;*
 and

and this is the reason, why they wou'd so SECT.
naturally agree in preferring it^a. III.

BUT we may observe, that tho' the rule Of the
of the assignment of property to the present rules,
possessor be natural, and by that means use- which de-
ful, termine
property.

G 2

^a No questions in philosophy are more difficult, than when a number of causes present themselves for the same phenomenon, to determine which is the principal and predominant. There seldom is any very precise argument to fix our choice, and men must be contented to be guided by a kind of taste or fancy, arising from analogy, and a comparison of similar instances. Thus, in the present case, there are, no doubt, motives of public interest for most of the rules, which determine property; but still I suspect, that these rules are principally fix'd by the imagination, or the more frivolous properties of our thought and conception. I shall continue to explain these causes, leaving it to the reader's choice, whether he will prefer those deriv'd from publick utility, or those deriv'd from the imagination. We shall begin with the right of the present possessor.

'Tis a quality, which (a) I have already observ'd in human nature, that when two objects appear in a close relation to each other, the mind is apt to ascribe to them any additional relation, in order to compleat the union; and this inclination is so strong, as often to make us run into errors (such as that of the conjunction of thought and matter) if we find that they can serve to that purpose. Many of our impressions are incapable of place or local position; and yet those very impressions we suppose to have a local conjunction with the impressions of sight and touch, merely because they are conjoin'd by causation, and are already united in the imagination. Since, therefore, we can feign a new relation, and even an absurd one, in order to compleat any union, 'twill easily be imagin'd, that if there be any relations, which depend on the mind, 'twill readily conjoin them to any preceding relation, and unite, by a new bond, such objects as have already an union in the fancy. Thus for instance, we never fail, in our arrangement of bodies, to place those which are *resembling* in contiguity to each other, or at least in cor-

respondent

(a) Book I. Part IV. Sect. 5.

PART II. ful, yet its utility extends not beyond the first formation of society; nor wou'd any thing be more pernicious, than the constant observance of it; by which restitution wou'd be excluded, and every injustice wou'd be authoriz'd and rewarded. We must, therefore, seek for some other circumstance, that may give rise to property after society is once establish'd; and of this kind, I find four most considerable, *viz.* Occupation, Prescription, Accession, and Succession. We shall

*Of justice
and injustice.*

respondent points of view; because we feel a satisfaction in joining the relation of contiguity to that of resemblance, or the resemblance of situation to that of qualities. And this is easily accounted for from the known properties of human nature. When the mind is determin'd to join certain objects, but undetermin'd in its choice of the particular objects, it naturally turns its eye to such as are related together. They are already united in the mind: They present themselves at the same time to the conception; and instead of requiring any new reason for their conjunction, it wou'd require a very powerful reason to make us over-look this natural affinity. This we shall have occasion to explain more fully afterwards, when we come to treat of *beauty*. In the mean time, we may content ourselves with observing, that the same love of order and uniformity, which arranges the books in a library, and the chairs in a parlour, contributes to the formation of society, and to the well-being of mankind, by modifying the general rule concerning the stability of possession. ~~And~~ as property forms a relation betwixt a person and an object, 'tis natural to found it on some preceding relation; and as property is nothing but a constant possession, secur'd by the laws of society; 'tis natural to add it to the present possession, which is a relation that resembles it. For this also has its influence. If it be natural to conjoin all sorts of relations, 'tis more so, to conjoin such relations as are resembling, and are related together.

briefly

briefly examine each of these, beginning SECT.
III.
with *Occupation*.

THE possession of all external goods is changeable and uncertain; which is one of the most considerable impediments to the establishment of society, and is the reason why, by universal agreement, express or tacite, men restrain themselves by what we now call the rules of justice and equity. The misery of the condition, which precedes this restraint, is the cause why we submit to that remedy as quickly as possible; and this affords ~~us~~ an easy reason, why we annex the idea of property to the first possession, or to *occupation*. Men are unwilling to leave property in suspense, even for the shortest time, or open the least door to violence and disorder. To which we may add, that the first possession always engages the attention most; and did we neglect it, there wou'd be no colour of reason for assigning property to any succeeding possession^b.

G 3

THERE

^b Some philosophers account for the right of occupation, by saying, that every one has a property in his own labour; and when he joins that labour to any thing, it gives him the property of the whole: But, 1. There are several kinds of occupation, where we cannot be said to join our labour to the object we acquire: As when we possess a meadow by grazing our cattle upon it. 2. This accounts for the matter by means of *accession*; which is taking a needless circuit. 3. We cannot be said to join our labour to any thing
but

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II.

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tice.*

THERE remains nothing, but to determine exactly, what is meant by possession; and this is not so easy as may at first sight be imagin'd. We are said to be in possession of any thing, not only when we immediately touch it, but also when we are so situated with respect to it, as to have it in our power to use it; and may move, alter, or destroy it, according to our present pleasure or advantage. This relation, then, is a species of cause and effect; and as property is nothing but a stable possession, deriv'd from the rules of justice, or the conventions of men, 'tis to be consider'd as the same species of relation. But here we may observe, that as the power of using any object becomes more or less certain, according as the interruptions we may meet with are more or less probable; and as this probability may increase by insensible degrees; 'tis in many cases impossible to determine when possession begins or ends; nor is there any certain standard, by which we can decide such controversies. A wild boar, that falls into our snares, is deem'd to be in our possession, if

but in a figurative sense. Properly speaking, we only make an alteration on it by our labour. This forms a relation betwixt us and the object; and thence arises the property, according to the preceding principles.

it

it be impossible for him to escape. But SECT.
 what do we mean by impossible? How do III.
 we separate this impossibility from an impro- *Of the*
 bability? And how distinguish that exactly *rules,*
 from a probability? Mark the precise limits *which de-*
 of the one and the other, and shew the *termine*
 standard, by which we may decide all dis- *property.*
 putes that may arise, and, as we find by ex-
 perience, frequently do arise upon this sub-
 ject.
 G 4 BUT

* If we seek a solution of these difficulties in reason and public interest, we never shall find satisfaction; and if we look for it in the imagination, 'tis evident, that the qualities, which operate upon that faculty, run so insensibly and gradually into each other, that 'tis impossible to give them any precise bounds or termination. The difficulties on this head must encrease, when we consider, that our judgment alters very sensibly, according to the subject, and that the same power and proximity will be deem'd possession in one case, which is not esteem'd such in another. A person, who has hunted a hare to the last degree of weariness, wou'd look upon it as an injustice for another to rush in before him, and seize his prey. But the same person, advancing to pluck an apple, that hangs within his reach, has no reason to complain, if another, more alert, passes him, and takes possession. What is the reason of this difference, but that immobility, not being natural to the hare, but the effect of industry, forms in that case a strong relation with the hunter, which is wanting in the other?

Here then it appears, that a certain and infallible power of enjoyment, without touch or some other sensible relation, often produces not property: And I farther observe, that a sensible relation, without any present power, is sometimes sufficient to give a title to any object. The sight of a thing is seldom a considerable relation, and is only regarded as such, when the object is hidden, or very obscure; in which case we find, that the view alone conveys a property; according to that maxim, *that even a whole continent belongs to the nation, which first discover'd it.* 'Tis however remarkable, that

PART II. BUT such disputes may not only arise concerning the real existence of property and possession, but also concerning their extent ; and these disputes are often susceptible of no decision, or can be decided by no other faculty than the imagination. A person who lands on the shore of a small island, that is desart and uncultivated, is deem'd its possessor from the very first moment, and acquires the

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justice.*

that both in the case of discovery and that of possession, the first discoverer and possessor must join to the relation an intention of rendering himself proprietor, otherwise the relation will not have its effect ; and that because the connexion in our fancy betwixt the property and the relation is not so great, but that it requires to be help'd by such an intention.

From all these circumstances, 'tis easy to see how perplex'd many questions may become concerning the acquisition of property by occupation ; and the least effort of thought may present us with instances, which are not susceptible of any reasonable decision. If we prefer examples, which are real, to such as are feign'd, we may consider the following one, which is to be met with in almost every writer, that has treated of the laws of nature. Two Grecian colonies, leaving their native country, in search of new seats, were inform'd that a city near them was deserted by its inhabitants. To know the truth of this report, they dispatch'd at once two messengers, one from each colony ; who finding on their approach, that their information was true, begun a race together with an intention to take possession of the city, each of them for his countrymen. One of these messengers, finding that he was not an equal match for the other, launch'd his spear at the gates of the city, and was so fortunate as to fix it there before the arrival of his companion. This produc'd a dispute betwixt the two colonies, which of them was the proprietor of the empty city ; and this dispute still subsists among philosophers. For my part I find the dispute impossible to be decided, and that because the whole question hangs upon the fancy, which in this case is not possess'd of any precise or determinate standard, upon which it can give sentence.

the property of the whole ; because the ob-
 ject is there bounded and circumscrib'd in
 the fancy, and at the same time is propor-
 tion'd to the new possessor. The same per-
 son landing on a desert island, as large as
Great Britain, extends his property no far-
 ther than his immediate possession ; tho' a
 numerous colony are esteem'd the proprietors
 of the whole from the instant of their de-
 barkment.

SECT.
III.

*Of the
rules,
which de-
termine
property.*

BUT it often happens, that the title of
 first possession becomes obscure thro' time ;
 and that 'tis impossible to determine many
 controversies, which may arise concerning it.
 In that case long possession or *prescription* na-
 turally takes place, and gives a person a suf-
 ficient property in any thing he enjoys. The

tence. To make this evident, let us consider, that if these
 two persons had been simply members of the colonies, and
 not messengers or deputies, their actions wou'd not have been
 of any consequence ; since in that case their relation to the
 colonies wou'd have been but feeble and imperfect. Add to
 this, that nothing determin'd them to run to the gates rather
 than the walls, or any other part of the city, but that the
 gates, being the most obvious and remarkable part, satisfy the
 fancy best in taking them for the whole ; as we find by the
 poets, who frequently draw their images and metaphors from
 them. Besides we may consider, that the touch or contact of
 the one messenger is not properly possession, no more than
 the piercing the gates with a spear ; but only forms a rela-
 tion ; and there is a relation, in the other case, equally ob-
 vious, tho' not, perhaps, of equal force. Which of these
 relations, then, conveys a right and property, or whether any
 of them be sufficient for that effect, I leave to the decision of
 such as are wiser than myself.

nature

PART nature of human society admits not of any
II. great accuracy ; nor can we always remount
 to the first origin of things, in order to determine their present condition. Any considerable space of time sets objects at such a distance, that they seem, in a manner, to lose their reality, and have as little influence on the mind, as if they never had been in being. A man's title, that is clear and certain at present, will seem obscure and doubtful fifty years hence, even tho' the facts, on which it is founded, shou'd be prov'd with the greatest evidence and certainty. The same facts have not the same influence after so long an interval of time. And this may be receiv'd as a convincing argument for our preceding doctrine with regard to property and justice. Possession during a long tract of time conveys a title to any object. But as 'tis certain, that, however every thing be produc'd in time, there is nothing real, that is produc'd by time ; it follows, that property being produc'd by time, is not any thing real in the objects, but is the offspring of the sentiments, on which alone time is found to have any influence ^d. WE

^d Present possession is plainly a relation betwixt a person and an object ; but is not sufficient to counter-balance the relation of first possession, unless the former be long and uninterrupted : In which case the relation is encreas'd on the side of the present

WE acquire the property of objects by *ac-* SECT.
III.
cession, when they are connected in an inti-
 mate manner with objects that are already *Of the*
 our property, and at the same time are infe- *rules,*
 rior to them. Thus the fruits of our garden, *which de-*
 the offspring of our cattle, and the work of *termine*
 our slaves, are all of them esteem'd our pro- *property.*
 perty, even before possession. Where ob-
 jects are connected together in the imagina-
 tion, they are apt to be put on the same
 footing, and are commonly suppos'd to be
 endow'd with the same qualities. We readily
 pass from one to the other, and make no
 difference in our judgments concerning them;
 especially if the latter be inferior to the for-
 mer^e.

THE

present possession, by the extent of time, and diminish'd on that of first possession, by the distance. This change in the relation produces a consequent change in the property.

^e This source of property can never be explain'd but from the imaginations; and one may affirm, that the causes are here unmix'd. We shall proceed to explain them more particularly, and illustrate them by examples from common life and experience.

It has been observ'd above, that the mind has a natural propensity to join relations, especially resembling ones, and finds a kind of fitness and uniformity in such an union. From this propensity are deriv'd these laws of nature, *that upon the first formation of society, property always follows the present possession*; and afterwards, *that it arises from first or from long possession*. Now we may easily observe, that relation is not confin'd merely to one degree; but that from an object, that is related to us, we acquire a relation to every other object, which is related to it, and so on, till the thought loses the chain by too long a progress. However the relation may
 weaken

PART II. THE right of *succession* is a very natural one, from the presum'd consent of the parent or near relation, and from the general interest of mankind, which requires, that men's

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and inju-
stice.

weaken by each remove, 'tis not immediately destroy'd; but frequently connects two objects by means of an intermediate one, which is related to both. And this principle is of such force as to give rise to the right of *accession*, and causes us to acquire the property not only of such objects as we are immediately possess'd of, but also of such as are closely connected with them.

Suppose a *German*, a *Frenchman*, and a *Spaniard* to come into a room, where there are plac'd upon the table three bottles of wine, *Rhenish*, *Burgundy* and *Port*; and suppose they shou'd fall a quarrelling about the division of them; a person, who was chosen for umpire, wou'd naturally, to shew his impartiality, give every one the product of his own country: And this from a principle, which, in some measure, is the source of those laws of nature, that ascribe property to occupation, prescription and accession.

In all these cases, and particularly that of accession, there is first a *natural* union betwixt the idea of the person and that of the object, and afterwards a new and *moral* union produc'd by that right or property, which we ascribe to the person. But here there occurs a difficulty, which merits our attention, and may afford us an opportunity of putting to trial that singular method of reasoning, which has been employ'd on the present subject. I have already observ'd, that the imagination passes with greater facility from little to great, than from great to little, and that the transition of ideas is always easier and smoother in the former case than in the latter. Now as the right of accession arises from the easy transition of ideas, by which related objects are connected together, it shou'd naturally be imagin'd, that the right of accession must encrease in strength, in proportion as the transition of ideas is perform'd with greater facility. It may, therefore, be thought, that when we have acquir'd the property of any small object, we shall readily consider any great object related to it as an accession, and as belonging to the proprietor of the small one; since the transition is in that case very easy from the small object to the great one, and shou'd connect them together in the closest manner. But in fact the case is always found to be

men's possessions shou'd pass to those, who S E C T.
are dearest to them, in order to render them III.
more industrious and frugal. Perhaps these

causes are seconded by the influence of *rela-*
tion *Of the rules, which de-*
termine property.

be otherwise. The empire of *Great Britain* seems to draw along with it the dominion of the *Orkneys*, the *Hebrides*, the isle of *Man*, and the isle of *Wight*; but the authority over those lesser islands does not naturally imply any title to *Great Britain*. In short, a small object naturally follows a great one as its accession; but a great one is never suppos'd to belong to the proprietor of a small one related to it, merely on account of that property and relation. Yet in this latter case the transition of ideas is smoother from the proprietor to the small object, which is his property, and from the small object to the great one, than in the former case from the proprietor to the great object, and from the great one to the small. It may therefore be thought, that these phenomena are objections to the foregoing hypothesis, *that the ascribing of property to accession is nothing but an affect of the relations of ideas, and of the smooth transition of the imagination.*

'Twill be easy to solve this objection, if we consider the agility and unsteadiness of the imagination, with the different views, in which it is continually placing its objects. When we attribute to a person a property in two objects, we do not always pass from the person to one object, and from that to the other related to it. The objects being here to be consider'd as the property of the person, we are apt to join them together, and place them in the same light. Suppose, therefore, a great and a small object to be related together; if a person be strongly related to the great object, he will likewise be strongly related to both the objects, consider'd together, because he is related to the most considerable part. On the contrary, if he be only related to the small object, he will not be strongly related to both, consider'd together, since his relation lies only with the most trivial part, which is not apt to strike us in any great degree, when we consider the whole. And this is the reason, why small objects become accessions to great ones, and not great to small.

'Tis the general opinion of philosophers and civilians, that the sea is incapable of becoming the property of any nation; and that because 'tis impossible to take possession of it, or form any such distinct relation with it, as may be the foundation of property.

PART II. tion, or the association of ideas, by which we

II. are naturally directed to consider the son after the parent's decease, and ascribe to him a title to his father's possessions. Those goods must

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property. Where this reason ceases, property immediately takes place. Thus the most strenuous advocates for the liberty of the seas universally allow, that friths and bays naturally belong as an accession to the proprietors of the surrounding continent. These have properly no more bond or union with the land, than the *pacific* ocean wou'd have; but having an union in the fancy, and being at the same time *inferior*, they are of course regarded as an accession.

The property of rivers, by the laws of most nations, and by the natural turn of our thought, is attributed to the proprietors of their banks, excepting such vast rivers as the *Rhine* or the *Danube*, which seem too large to the imagination to follow as an accession the property of the neighbouring fields. Yet even these rivers are consider'd as the property of that nation, thro' whose dominions they run; the idea of a nation being of a suitable bulk to correspond with them, and bear them such a relation in the fancy.

they The accessions, which are made to lands bordering upon rivers, follow the land, say the civilians, provided it be made by what they call *alluvion*, that is, insensibly and imperceptibly; which are circumstances that mightily assist the imagination in the conjunction. Where there is any considerable portion torn at once from one bank, and join'd to another, it becomes not his property, whose land it falls on, till it unite with the land, and till the trees or plants have spread their roots into both. Before that, the imagination does not sufficiently join them.

There are other cases, which somewhat resemble this of accession, but which, at the bottom, are considerably different, and merit our attention. Of this kind is the conjunction of the properties of different persons, after such a manner as not to admit of *separation*. The question is, to whom the united mass must belong.

Where this conjunction is of such a nature as to admit of *divison*, but not of *separation*, the decision is natural and easy. The whole mass must be suppos'd to be common betwixt the proprietors of the several parts, and afterwards must be divided according to the proportions of these parts. But

here

must become the property of some body: *SECT.*
 But *of whom* is the question. Here 'tis evi- *III.*
 dent the persons children naturally present
 them-

*Of the
 rules,
 which de-
 termine
 property.*

here I cannot forbear taking notice of a remarkable subtilty of the *Roman* law, in distinguishing betwixt *confusion* and *commixtion*. *Confusion* is an union of two bodies, such as different liquors, where the parts become entirely undistinguishable. *Commixtion* is the blending of two bodies, such as two bushels of corn, where the parts remain separate in an obvious and visible manner. As in the latter case the imagination discovers not so entire an union as in the former, but is able to trace and preserve a distinct idea of the property of each; this is the reason, why the *civil* law, tho' it establish'd an entire community in the case of *confusion*, and after that a proportional division, yet in the case of *commixtion*, supposes each of the proprietors to maintain a distinct right; however necessity may at last force them to submit to the same division.

Quod si frumentum Titii frumento tuo mistum fuerit: siquidem ex voluntate vestra, commune est: quia singula corpora, id est, singula grana, quæ cujusque propria fuerunt, ex consensu vestro communicata sunt. Quod si casu id mistum fuerit, vel Titius id miscuerit sine tua voluntate, non videtur id commune esse; quia singula corpora in sua substantia durant. Sed nec magis istis casibus commune sit frumentum quam grex intelligitur esse communis, si pecora Titii tuis pecoribus mista fuerint. Sed si ab alterutro vestrum totum id frumentum retineatur, in rem quidem actio pro modo frumenti cujusque competit. Arbitrio autem judicis, ut ipse æstimet quale cujusque frumentum fuerit. Inst. Lib. II. Tit. 1. §. 28.

Where the properties of two persons are united after such a manner as neither to admit of *division* nor *separation*, as when one builds a house on another's ground, in that case, the whole must belong to one of the proprietors: And here I assert, that it naturally is conceiv'd to belong to the proprietor of the most considerable part. For however the compound object may have a relation to two different persons, and carry our view at once to both of them, yet as the most considerable part principally engages our attention, and by the strict union draws the inferior along it; for this reason, the whole bears a relation to the proprietor of that part, and is regarded as his property. The only difficulty is, what we shall be pleas'd to call the most considerable part, and most attractive to the imagination. This

PART themselves to the mind; and being already
 II. connected to those possessions by means of
 their

Of justice
 and inju-
 stice.

This quality depends on several different circumstances, which have little connexion with each other. One part of a compound object may become more considerable than another, either because it is more constant and durable; because it is of greater value; because it is more obvious and remarkable; because it is of greater extent; or because its existence is more separate and independent. 'Twill be easy to conceive, that, as these circumstances may be conjoin'd and oppos'd in all the different ways, and according to all the different degrees, which can be imagin'd, there will result many cases, where the reasons on both sides are so equally ballanc'd, that 'tis impossible for us to give any satisfactory decision. Here then is the proper business of municipal laws, to fix what the principles of human nature have left undetermin'd,

The superficies yields to the soil, says the civil law: The writing to the paper: The canvas to the picture. These decisions do not well agree together, and are a proof of the contrariety of those principles, from which they are deriv'd.

But of all the questions of this kind the most curious is that, which for so many ages divided the disciples of *Proculus* and *Sabinus*. Suppose a person shou'd make a cup from the metal of another, or a ship from his wood, and suppose the proprietor of the metal or wood shou'd demand his goods, the question is, whether he acquires a title to the cup or ship. *Sabinus* maintain'd the affirmative, and asserted that the substance or matter is the foundation of all the qualities; that it is incorruptible and immortal, and therefore superior to the form, which is casual and dependent. On the other hand, *Proculus* observ'd, that the form is the most obvious and remarkable part, and that from it bodies are denominat'd of this or that particular species. To which he might have added, that the matter or substance is in most bodies so fluctuating and uncertain, that 'tis utterly impossible to trace it in all its changes. For my part, I know not from what principles such a controversy can be certainly determin'd. I shall therefore content my self with observing, that the decision of *Trebonian* seems to me pretty ingenious; that the cup belongs to the proprietor of the metal, because it can be brought back to its first form: But that the ship belongs to the author of its form for a contrary reason. But however ingenious this rea-
 son

their deceas'd parent, we are apt to connect **SECT.**
them still farther by the relation of property. **III.**

Of this there are many parallel instances^f.

*Of the
rules
which de-
termine
property.*

son may seem, it plainly depends upon the fancy, which by the possibility of such a reduction, finds a closer connexion and relation betwixt a cup and the proprietor of its metal, than betwixt a ship and the proprietor of its wood, where the substance is more fix'd and unalterable.

^f In examining the different titles to authority in government, we shall meet with many reasons to convince us, that the right of succession depends, in a great measure on the imagination. Mean while I shall rest contented with observing one example, which belongs to the present subject. Suppose that a person die without children, and that a dispute arises among his relations concerning his inheritance; 'tis evident, that if his riches be deriv'd partly from his father, partly from his mother, the most natural way of determining such a dispute, is, to divide his possessions, and assign each part to the family, from whence it is deriv'd. Now as the person is suppos'd to have been once the full and entire proprietor of those goods; I ask, what is it makes us find a certain equity and natural reason in this partition, except it be the imagination? His affection to these families does not depend upon his possessions; for which reason his consent can never be presum'd precisely for such a partition. And as to the public interest, it seems not to be in the least concern'd on the one side or the other.

H

SECT.

S E C T. IV.

Of the transference of property by consent.

S E C T. IV. **H**OWEVER useful, or even necessary, the stability of possession may be to human society, 'tis attended with very considerable inconveniences. The relation of fitness or suitableness ought never to enter into consideration, in distributing the properties of mankind ; but we must govern ourselves by rules, which are more general in their application, and more free from doubt and uncertainty. Of this kind is *present* possession upon the first establishment of society ; and afterwards *occupation*, *prescription*, *accession*, and *succession*. As these depend very much on chance, they must frequently prove contradictory both to men's wants and desires ; and persons and possessions must often be very ill adjusted. This is a grand inconvenience, which calls for a remedy. To apply one directly, and allow every man to seize by violence what he judges to be fit for him, wou'd destroy society ; and therefore the rules of justice seek

seek some medium betwixt a rigid stability, S E C T.
and this changeable and uncertain adjust- IV.

ment. But there is no medium better than *Of the transference of property by consent.*

the proprietor ~~consents~~ to bestow them on some other person. This rule can have no ill consequence, in occasioning wars and dissensions; since the proprietor's consent, who alone is concern'd, is taken along in the alienation; And it may serve to many good purposes in adjusting property to persons. Different parts of the earth produce different commodities; and not only so, but different men both are by nature fitted for different employments, and attain to greater perfection in any one, when they confine themselves to it alone. All this requires a mutual exchange and commerce; for which reason the translation of property by consent is founded on a law of nature, as well as its stability without such a consent.

So far is determin'd by a plain utility and interest. But perhaps 'tis from more trivial reasons, that *delivery*, or a sensible transference of the object is commonly requir'd by civil laws, and also by the laws of nature, according to most authors, as a requisite circumstance in the translation of pro-

PART perty. The property of an object, when
 II. taken for something real, without any re-
 Of justice
 and inju-
 stice. ference to morality, or the sentiments of the
 mind, is a quality perfectly insensible, and
 even inconceivable; nor can we form any
 distinct notion, either of its stability or
 translation. This imperfection of our ideas
 is less sensibly felt with regard to its stability,
 as it engages less our attention, and is easily
 past over by the mind, without any scru-
 pulous examination. But as the translation
 of property from one person to another is a
 more remarkable event, the defect of our
 ideas becomes more sensible on that occa-
 sion, and obliges us to turn ourselves on
 every side in search of some remedy. Now
 as nothing more enlivens any idea than a
 present impression, and a relation betwixt
 that impression and the idea; 'tis natural for
 us to seek some false light from this quarter.
 In order to aid the imagination in conceiving
 the transference of property, we take the
 sensible object, and actually transfer its pos-
 session to the person, on whom we wou'd
 bestow the property. The suppos'd resem-
 blance of the actions, and the presence of
 this sensible delivery, deceive the mind, and
 make it fancy, that it conceives the myste-
 rious transition of the property. And that
 this

this explication of the matter is just, appears S E C T. IV.
 hence, that men have invented a *symbolical* delivery, to satisfy the fancy, where the real one is impracticable. Thus the giving the keys of a granary is understood to be the delivery of the corn contain'd in it: *Of the transference of property by consent.*

The giving of stone and earth represents the delivery of a mannor. This is a kind of superstitious practice in civil laws, and in the laws of nature, resembling the *Roman catholic* superstitions in religion. As the *Roman catholics* represent the inconceivable mysteries of the *Christian* religion, and render them more present to the mind, by a taper, or habit, or grimace, which is suppos'd to resemble them; so lawyers and moralists have run into like inventions for the same reason, and have endeavour'd by those means to satisfy themselves concerning the transference of property by consent.

S E C T. V.

Of the obligation of promises.

THAT the rule of morality, which enjoins the performance of promises, is not *natural*, will sufficiently appear from

PART these two propositions, which I proceed to

II.

*Of justice
and inju-
stice.*

prove, viz. *that a promise wou'd not be intelligible, before human conventions had estab-lish'd it; and that even if it were intelligible, it wou'd not be attended with any moral obligation.*

I SAY, *first*, that a promise is not intelligible naturally, nor antecedent to human conventions; and that a man, unacquainted with society, could never enter into any engagements with another, even tho' they could perceive each other's thoughts by intuition. If promises be natural and intelligible, there must be some act of the mind attending these words, *I promise*; and on this act of the mind must the obligation depend. Let us, therefore, run over all the faculties of the soul, and see which of them is exerted in our promises.

THE act of the mind, express'd by a promise, is not a *resolution* to perform any thing: For that alone never imposes any obligation. Nor is it a *desire* of such a performance: For we may bind ourselves without such a desire, or even with an aversion, declar'd and avow'd. Neither is it the *will-ing* of that action, which we promise to perform: For a promise always regards some future time, and the will has an influence
I only

only on present actions. It follows, there-fore, that since the act of the mind, which enters into a promise, and produces its obligation, is neither the resolving, desiring, nor willing any particular performance, it must necessarily be the *willing* of that *obligation*, which arises from the promise. Nor is this only a conclusion of philosophy; but is entirely conformable to our common ways of thinking and of expressing ourselves, when we say that we are bound by our own consent, and that the obligation arises from our mere will and pleasure. The only question, then, is, whether there be not a manifest absurdity in supposing this act of the mind, and such an absurdity as no man cou'd fall into, whose ideas are not confounded, ~~with~~ ^{by} prejudice and the fallacious use of language.

ALL morality depends upon our sentiments; and when any action, or quality of the mind, pleases us *after a certain manner*, we say it is virtuous; and when the neglect, or non-performance of it, displeases us *after a like manner*, we say that we lie under an obligation to perform it. A change of the obligation supposes a change of the sentiment; and a creation of a new obligation supposes some new sentiment to arise. But 'tis certain we can naturally no more

PART change our own sentiments, than the motions of the heavens; nor by a single act of our will, that is, by a promise, render any action agreeable or disagreeable, moral or immoral; which, without that act, wou'd have produc'd contrary impressions, or have been endow'd with different qualities. It wou'd be absurd, therefore, to will any new obligation, that is, any new sentiment of pain or pleasure; nor is it possible, that men cou'd naturally fall into so gross an absurdity. A promise, therefore, is *naturally* something altogether unintelligible, nor is there any act of the mind belonging to it^a.

II.
Of justice
and injustice.

BUT

^a Were morality discoverable by reason, and not by sentiment, 'twou'd be still more evident, that promises cou'd make no alteration upon it. Morality is suppos'd to consist in relation. Every new imposition of morality, therefore, must arise from some new relation of objects; and consequently the will cou'd not produce *immediately* any change in morals, but cou'd have that effect only by producing a change upon the objects. But as the moral obligation of a promise is the pure effect of the will, without the least change in any part of the universe; it follows, that promises have no *natural* obligation.

Shou'd it be said, that this act of the will being in effect a new object, produces new relations and new duties; I wou'd answer, that this is a pure sophism, which may be detected by a very moderate share of accuracy and exactness. To will a new obligation, is to will a new relation of objects; and therefore, if this new relation of objects were form'd by the volition itself, we shou'd in effect will the volition; which is plainly absurd and impossible. The will has here no object to which it cou'd tend; but must return upon itself *in infinitum*. The new obligation depends upon new relations.

The

BUT, *secondly*, if there was any act of the mind belonging to it, it could not naturally produce any obligation. This appears evidently from the foregoing reasoning.

SECT.
V.
Of the obligation of promises.

A promise creates a new obligation. A new obligation supposes new sentiments to arise. The will never creates new sentiments. There could not naturally, therefore, arise any obligation from a promise, even supposing the mind could fall into the absurdity of willing that obligation.

THE same truth may be prov'd still more evidently by that reasoning, which prov'd justice in general to be an artificial virtue. No action can be requir'd of us as our duty, unless there be implanted in human nature some actuating passion or motive, capable of producing the action. This motive cannot be the sense of duty. A sense of duty supposes an antecedent obligation: And where an action is not requir'd by any natural passion, it cannot be requir'd by any natural obligation; since it may be omitted without proving

The new relations depend upon a new volition. The new volition has for object a new obligation, and consequently new relations, and consequently a new volition; which volition again has in view a new obligation, relation and volition, without any termination. 'Tis impossible, therefore, we cou'd ever will a new obligation; and consequently 'tis impossible the will cou'd ever accompany a promise, or produce a new obligation of morality.

PART proving any defect or imperfection in the
 II. mind and temper, and consequently without

*Of justice
 and inju-
 stice.*

any vice. Now 'tis evident we have no motive leading us to the performance of promises, distinct from a sense of duty. If we thought, that promises had no moral obligation, we never shou'd feel any inclination to observe them. This is not the case with the natural virtues. Tho' there was no obligation to relieve the miserable, our humanity wou'd lead us to it; and when we omit that duty, the immorality of the omission arises from its being a proof, that we want the natural sentiments of humanity. A father knows it to be his duty to take care of his children: But he has also a natural inclination to it. And if no human creature had that inclination, no one cou'd lie under any such obligation. But as there is naturally no inclination to observe promises, distinct from a sense of their obligation; it follows, that fidelity is no natural virtue, and that promises have no force, antecedent to human conventions.

If any one dissent from this, he must give a regular proof of these two propositions, viz. *that there is a peculiar act of the mind, annexed to promises; and that consequent to this act of the mind, there arises an inclination*

inclination to perform, distinct from a sense SECT.
of duty. I presume, that it is impossible to V.
prove either of these two points; and there-
fore I venture to conclude, that promises are *Of the ob-*
human inventions, founded on the necessities *ligation of*
and interests of society. *promises.*

IN order to discover these necessities and interests, we must consider the same qualities of human nature, which we have already found to give rise to the preceding laws of society. Men being naturally selfish, or endow'd only with a confin'd generosity, they are not easily induc'd to perform any action for the interest of strangers, except with a view to some reciprocal advantage, which they had no hope of obtaining but by such a performance. Now as it frequently happens, that these mutual performances cannot be finish'd at the same instant, 'tis necessary, that one party be contented to remain in uncertainty, and depend upon the gratitude of the other for a return of kindness. But so much corruption is there among men, that, generally speaking, this becomes but a slender security; and as the benefactor is here suppos'd to bestow his favours with a view to self-interest, this both takes off from the obligation, and sets an example of selfishness, which is the true mother

PART mother of ingratitude. Were we, therefore,

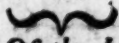
II. to follow the natural course of our passions
 and inclinations, we shou'd perform but
 few actions for the advantage of others,
 from disinterested views ; because we are
 naturally very limited in our kindness and
 affection : And we shou'd perform as few of
 that kind, out of a regard to interest ; be-
 cause we cannot depend upon their grati-
 tude. Here then is the mutual commerce of
 good offices in a manner lost among man-
 kind, and every one reduc'd to his own
 skill and industry for his well-being and sub-
 sistence. The invention of the law of na-
 ture, concerning the *stability* of possession,
 has already render'd men tolerable to each
 other ; that of the *transference* of property
 and possession by consent has begun to render
 them mutually advantageous : But still these
 laws ~~of nature~~, however strictly observ'd,
 are not sufficient to render them so service-
 able to each other, as by nature they are
 fitted to become. Tho' possession be *stable*,
 men may often reap but small advantage
 from it, while they are possess'd of a greater
 quantity of any species of goods than they
 have occasion for, and at the same time
 suffer by the want of others. The *transference*
 of property, which is the proper remedy
 for

for this inconvenience, cannot remedy it entirely; because it can only take place with regard to such objects as are *present* and *individual*, but not to such as are *absent* or *general*. One cannot transfer the property of a particular house, twenty leagues distant; because the consent cannot be attended with delivery, which is a requisite circumstance. Neither can one transfer the property of ten bushels of corn, or five hogsheds of wine, by the mere expression and consent; because these are only general terms, and have no direct relation to any particular heap of corn, or barrels of wine. Besides, the commerce of mankind is not confin'd to the barter of commodities, but may extend to services and actions, which we may exchange to our mutual interest and advantage. Your corn is ripe to-day; mine will be so to-morrow. 'Tis profitable for us both, that I shou'd labour with you to-day, and that you shou'd aid me to-morrow. I have no kindness for you, and know you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains upon your account; and should I labour with you upon my own account, in expectation of a return, I know I shou'd be disappointed, and that I shou'd in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I

leave

SECT.

V.


Of the obligation of promises.

PART leave you to labour alone: You treat me in

II. the same manner. The seasons change ;

*Of justice
and inju-
stice.* and both of us lose our harvests for want
of mutual confidence and security.

ALL this is the effect of the natural and inherent principles and passions of human nature ; and as these passions and principles are inalterable, it may be thought, that our conduct, which depends on them, must be so too, and that 'twou'd be in vain, either for moralists or politicians, to tamper with us, or attempt to change the usual course of our actions, with a view to public interest. And indeed, did the success of their designs depend upon their success in correcting the selfishness and ingratitude of men, they wou'd never make any progress, unless aided by omnipotence, which is alone able to new-mould the human mind, and change its character in such fundamental articles. All they can pretend to, is, to give a new direction to those natural passions, and teach us that we can better satisfy our appetites in an oblique and artificial manner, than by their headlong and impetuous motion. Hence I learn to do a service to another, without bearing him any real kindness ; because I foresee, that he will return my service, in expectation of another of the same kind,

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III

kind, and in order to maintain the same
correspondence of good offices with me or
with others. And accordingly, after I have
serv'd him, and he is in possession of the
advantage arising from my action, he is in-
duc'd to perform his part, as foreseeing the
consequences of his refusal.

SECT.

V.

*Of the ob-
ligation of
promises.*

BUT tho' this self-interested commerce of
men begins to take place, and to predomi-
nate in society, it does not entirely abolish
the more generous and noble intercourse of
friendship and good offices. I may still do
services to such persons as I love, and am
more particularly acquainted with, without
any prospect of advantage; and they may
make me a return in the same manner, with-
out any view but that of recompensing my
past services. In order, therefore, to distinguish
those two different sorts of commerce, the
interested and the disinterested, there is a *cer-
tain form of words* invented for the former,
by which we bind ourselves to the per-
formance of any action. This form of
words constitutes what we call a *promise*,
which is the sanction of the interested com-
merce of mankind. When a man says *he
promises any thing*, he in effect expresses a
resolution of performing it; and along with
that, by making use of this *form of words*,
subjects

PART subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again in case of failure. A resolution is the natural act of the mind, which promises express : But were there no more than a resolution in the case, promises wou'd only declare our former motives, and wou'd not create any new motive or obligation. They are the conventions of men, which create a new motive, when experience has taught us, that human affairs wou'd be conducted much more for mutual advantage, were there certain *symbols* or *signs* instituted, by which we might give each other security of our conduct in any particular incident. After these signs are instituted, whoever uses them is immediately bound by his interest to execute his engagements, and must never expect to be trusted any more, if he refuse to perform what he promis'd.

*Of justice
and injustice.*

NOR is that knowledge, which is requisite to make mankind sensible of this interest in the *institution* and *observance* of promises, to be esteem'd superior to the capacity of human nature, however savage and uncultivated. There needs but a very little practice of the world, to make us perceive all these consequences and advantages. The shortest experience of society discovers them to every mortal ; and when each individual perceives the

the same sense of interest in all his fellows, he immediately performs his part of any contract, as being assur'd, that they will not be wanting in theirs. All of them, by concert, enter into a scheme of actions, calculated for common benefit, and agree to be true to their word; nor is there any thing requisite to form this concert or convention, but that every one have a sense of interest in the faithful fulfilling of engagements, and express that sense to other members of the society. This immediately causes that interest to operate upon them; and interest is the *first* obligation to the performance of promises.

SECT.
V.
Of the obligation of promises.

AFTERWARDS a sentiment of morals concurs with interest, and becomes a new obligation upon mankind. This sentiment of morality, in the performance of promises, arises from the same principles as that in the abstinence from the property of others. *Public interest, education, and the artifices of politicians,* have the same effect in both cases. The difficulties, that occur to us, in supposing a moral obligation to attend promises, we either surmount or elude. For instance; the expression of a resolution is not commonly suppos'd to be obligatory; and we cannot readily conceive how the

I making

PART making use of a certain form of words

II. shou'd be able to cause any material difference. Here, therefore, we *feign* a new act of the mind, which we call the *willing* an obligation; and on this we suppose the morality to depend. But we have prov'd already, that there is no such act of the mind, and consequently that promises impose no natural obligation.

*Of justice
and in-
justice.*

To confirm this, we may subjoin some other reflections concerning that will, which is suppos'd to enter into a promise, and to cause its obligation. 'Tis evident, that the will alone is never suppos'd to cause the obligation, but must be express'd by words or signs, in order to impose a tie upon any man. The expression being once brought in as subservient to the will, soon becomes the principal part of the promise; nor will a man be less bound by his word, tho' he secretly give a different direction to his intention, and with-hold himself both from a resolution, and from willing an obligation. But tho' the expression makes on most occasions the whole of the promise, yet it does not always so; and one, who shou'd make use of any expression, of which he knows not the meaning, and which he uses without any intention of binding himself, wou'd not certainly

certainly be bound by it. Nay, tho' he knows its meaning, yet if he uses it in jest only, and with such signs as shew evidently he has no serious intention of binding himself, he wou'd not lie under any obligation of performance; but 'tis necessary, that the words be a perfect expression of the will, without any contrary signs. Nay, even this we must not carry so far as to imagine, that one, whom, by our quickness of understanding, we conjecture, from certain signs, to have an intention of deceiving us, is not bound by his expression or verbal promise, if we accept of it; but must limit this conclusion to those cases, where the signs are of a different kind from those of deceit. All these contradictions are easily accounted for, if the obligation of promises be merely a human invention for the convenience of society; but will never be explain'd, if it be something *real* and *natural*, arising from any action of the mind or body.

I SHALL farther observe, that since every new promise imposes a new obligation of morality on the person who promises, and since this new obligation arises from his will; 'tis one of the most mysterious and incomprehensible operations that can possibly be imagin'd; and may even be compar'd to

SECT.

V.

Of the obligation of promises.

PART *transubstantiation, or holy orders*^a, where a

II. certain form of words, along with a certain
 Of justice intention, changes entirely the nature of an
 and inju- external object, and even of a human crea-
 stice. ture. But tho' these mysteries be so far
 alike, 'tis very remarkable, that they differ
 widely in other particulars, and that this
 difference may be regarded as a strong proof
 of the difference of their origins. As the
 obligation of promises is an invention for the
 interest of society, 'tis warp'd into as many
 different forms as that interest requires, and
 even runs into direct contradictions, rather
 than lose sight of its object. But as those
 other monstrous doctrines are mere priestly
 inventions, and have no public interest in
 view, they are less disturb'd in their progress
 by new obstacles; and it must be own'd,
 that, after the first absurdity, they follow
 more directly the current of reason and good
 sense. Theologians clearly perceiv'd, that
 the external form of words, being mere
 sound, require an intention to make them
 have any efficacy; and that this intention
 being once consider'd as a requisite circum-
 stance, its absence must equally prevent the
 effect,

^a I mean so far, as holy orders are suppos'd to produce the *indelible character*. In other respects they are only a legal qualification.

effect, whether avow'd or conceal'd, whether sincere or deceitful. Accordingly they have commonly determin'd, that the intention of the priest makes the sacrament, and that when he secretly withdraws his intention, he is highly criminal in himself; but still destroys the baptism, or communion, or holy orders. The terrible consequences of this doctrine were not able to hinder its taking place; as the inconvenience of a similar doctrine, with regard to promises, have prevented that doctrine from establishing itself. Men are always more concern'd about the present life than the future; and are apt to think the smallest evil, which regards the former, more important than the greatest, which regards the latter.

WE may draw the same conclusion, concerning the origin of promises, from the *force*, which is suppos'd to invalidate all contracts, and to free us from their obligation. Such a principle is a proof, that promises have no natural obligation, and are mere artificial contrivances for the convenience and advantage of society. If we consider aright of the matter, force is not essentially different from any other motive of hope or fear, which may induce us to engage our word, and lay ourselves under any obligation.

PART II. tion. A man, dangerously wounded, who

II. promises a competent sum to a surgeon to cure him, wou'd certainly be bound to performance ; tho' the case be not so much different from that of one, who promises a sum to a robber, as to produce so great a difference in our sentiments of morality, if these sentiments were not built entirely on public interest and convenience.

*Of justice
and injustice.*

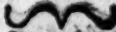
S E C T. VI.

Some farther reflections concerning justice and injustice.

S E C T.
VI.

WE have now run over the three fundamental laws of nature, *that of the stability of possession, of its transference by consent, and of the performance of promises.* 'Tis on the strict observance of those three laws, that the peace and security of human society entirely depend ; nor is there any possibility of establishing a good correspondence among men, where these are neglected. Society is absolutely necessary for the well-being of men ; and these are as necessary to the support of society. Whatever restraint they may impose on the passions of men, they are the real offspring of those

those passions, and are only a more artful SECT.
and more refin'd way of satisfying them. VI.

Nothing is more vigilant and inventive than  our passions; and nothing is more obvious, Some further reflections concerning justice and injustice.
than the convention for the observance of these rules. Nature has, therefore, trusted this affair entirely to the conduct of men, and has not plac'd in the mind any peculiar original principles, to determine us to a set of actions, into which the other principles of our frame and constitution were sufficient to lead us. And to convince us the more fully of this truth, we may here stop a moment, and from a review of the preceding reasonings may draw some new arguments, to prove that those laws, however necessary, are entirely artificial, and of human invention; and consequently that justice is an artificial, and not a natural virtue.

I. THE first argument I shall make use of is deriv'd from the vulgar definition of justice. Justice is commonly defin'd to be *a constant and perpetual will of giving every one his due.* In this definition 'tis suppos'd, that there are such things as right and property, independent of justice, and antecedent to it; and that they wou'd have subsisted, tho' men had never dreamt of practicing

PART tising such a virtue. I have already ob-
 II. serv'd, in a cursory manner, the fallacy of
 Of justice this opinion, and shall here continue to open
 and in- up a little more distinctly my sentiments on
 justice. that subject.

I SHALL begin with observing, that this quality, which we call *property*, is like many of the imaginary qualities of the *peripatetic* philosophy, and vanishes upon a more accurate inspection into the subject, when consider'd a-part from our moral sentiments. 'Tis evident property does not consist in any of the sensible qualities of the object. For these may continue invariably the same, while the property changes. Property, therefore, must consist in some relation of the object. But 'tis not in its relation with regard to other external and inanimate objects. For these may also continue invariably the same, while the property changes. This quality, therefore, consists in the relations of objects to intelligent and rational beings. But 'tis not the external and corporeal relation, which forms the essence of property. For that relation may be the same betwixt inanimate objects, or with regard to brute creatures; tho' in those cases it forms no property. 'Tis, therefore, in some internal relation, that the property consists; that is,
 in

in some influence, which the external relations of the object have on the mind and actions. Thus the external relation, which we call *occupation* or first possession, is not of itself imagin'd to be the property of the object, but only to cause its property. Now 'tis evident, this external relation causes nothing in external objects, and has only an influence on the mind, by giving us a sense of duty in abstaining from that object, and in restoring it to the first possessor. These actions are properly what we call *justice*; and consequently 'tis on that virtue that the nature of property depends, and not the virtue on the property.

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VI.
Some farther reflections concerning justice and injustice

If any one, therefore, wou'd assert, that justice is a natural virtue, and injustice a natural vice, he must assert, that abstracting from the notions of *property*, and *right* and *obligation*, a certain conduct and train of actions, in certain external relations of objects, has naturally a moral beauty or deformity, and causes an original pleasure or uneasiness. Thus the restoring a man's goods to him is consider'd as virtuous, not because nature has annex'd a certain sentiment of pleasure to such a conduct, with regard to the property of others, but because she has annex'd that sentiment to such a conduct, with regard

PART regard to those external objects, of which

II. others have had the first or long possession, or which they have receiv'd by the consent of those, who have had first or long possession. If nature has given us no such sentiment, there is not, naturally, nor antecedent to human conventions, any such thing as property. Now, tho' it seems sufficiently evident, in this dry and accurate consideration of the present subject, that nature has annex'd no pleasure or sentiment of approbation to such a conduct; yet that I may leave as little room for doubt as possible, I shall subjoin a few more arguments to confirm my opinion.

*Of justice
and injustice.*

First, If nature had given us a pleasure of this kind, it wou'd have been as evident and discernible as on every other occasion; nor shou'd we have found any difficulty to perceive, that the consideration of such actions, in such a situation, gives a certain pleasure and sentiment of approbation. We shou'd not have been oblig'd to have recourse to notions of property in the definition of justice, and at the same time make use of the notions of justice in the definition of property. This deceitful method of reasoning is a plain proof, that there are contain'd in the subject some obscurities and difficulties, which

which we are not able to surmount, and which we desire to evade by this artifice. SECT. VI.

Secondly, Those rules, by which properties, rights, and obligations are determin'd, have in them no marks of a natural origin, but many of artifice and contrivance. *Some farther reflections concerning justice and injustice.*

They are too numerous to have proceeded from nature: They are changeable by human laws: And have all of them a direct and evident tendency to public good, and the support of civil society. This last circumstance is remarkable upon two accounts.

First, because, tho' the cause of the establishment of these laws had been a regard for the public good, as much as the public good is their natural tendency, they wou'd still have been artificial, as being purposely contriv'd and directed to a certain end.

Secondly, because, if men had been endow'd with such a strong regard for public good, they wou'd never have restrain'd themselves by these rules; so that the laws of justice arise from natural principles in a manner still more oblique and artificial. 'Tis self-love which is their real origin; and as the self-love of one person is naturally contrary to that of another, these several interested passions are oblig'd to adjust themselves after such a manner as to concur in some system of

PART of conduct and behaviour. This system,

II. therefore, comprehending the interest of each individual, is of course advantageous to the public; tho' it be not intended for that purpose by the inventors.

*Of justice
and in-
justice.*

II. IN the second place we may observe, that all kinds of vice and virtue run insensibly into each other, and may approach by such imperceptible degrees as will make it very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to determine when the one ends, and the other begins; and from this observation we may derive a new argument for the foregoing principle. For whatever may be the case, with regard to all kinds of vice and virtue, 'tis certain, that rights, and obligations, and property, admit of no such insensible gradation, but that a man either has a full and perfect property, or none at all; and is either entirely oblig'd to perform any action, or lies under no manner of obligation. However civil laws may talk of a perfect *dominion*, and of an imperfect, 'tis easy to observe, that this arises from a fiction, which has no foundation in reason, and can never enter into our notions of natural justice and equity. A man that hires a horse, tho' but for a day, has as full a right to
make

make use of it for that time, as he whom SECT.
we call its proprietor has to make use of it VI.
any other day; and 'tis evident, that how-
ever the use may be bounded in time or de-
gree, the right itself is not susceptible of any
such gradation, but is absolute and entire, so
far as it extends. Accordingly we may ob-
serve, that this right both arises and perishes
in an instant; and that a man entirely ac-
quires the property of any object by occu-
pation, or the consent of the proprietor;
and loses it by his own consent; without
any of that insensible gradation, which is
remarkable in other qualities and relations.
Since, therefore, this is the case with regard
to property, and rights, and obligations, I ask,
how it stands with regard to justice and
injustice? After whatever manner you an-
swer this question, you run into inextricable
difficulties. If you reply, that justice and
injustice admit of degree, and run insensibly
into each other, you expressly contradict the
foregoing position, that obligation and pro-
perty are not susceptible of such a gradation.
These depend entirely upon justice and in-
justice, and follow them in all their varia-
tions. Where the justice is entire, the pro-
perty is also entire: Where the justice is im-
perfect, the property must also be imperfect.

*Some fur-
ther re-
flections
concerning
justice and
injustice.*

And

PART And *vice versa*, if the property admit of no

II.

*Of Justice
and Inju-
stice.*

such variations, they must also be incompatible with justice. If you assent, therefore, to this last proposition, and assert, that justice and injustice are not susceptible of degrees, you in effect assert, that they are not *naturally* either vicious or virtuous; since vice and virtue, moral good and evil, and indeed all *natural* qualities, run insensibly into each other, and are, on many occasions, undistinguishable.

AND here it may be worth while to observe, that tho' abstract reasoning, and the general maxims of philosophy and law establish this position, *that property, and right, and obligation admit not of degrees*, yet in our common and negligent way of thinking, we find great difficulty to entertain that opinion, and do even *secretly* embrace the contrary principle. An object must either be in the possession of one person or another. An action must either be perform'd or not. The necessity there is of choosing one side in these dilemmas, and the impossibility there often is of finding any just medium, oblige us, when we reflect on the matter, to acknowledge, that all property and obligations are entire. But on the other hand, when we consider the origin of property and ob-

ligation, and find that they depend on public utility, and sometimes on the propensity of the imagination, which are seldom entire on any side; we are naturally inclin'd to imagine, that these moral relations admit of an insensible gradation. Hence it is, that in references, where the consent of the parties leave the referees entire masters of the subject, they commonly discover so much equity and justice on both sides, as induces them to strike a medium, and divide the difference betwixt the parties. Civil judges, who have not this liberty, but are oblig'd to give a decisive sentence on some one side, are often at a loss how to determine, and are necessitated to proceed on the most frivolous reasons in the world. Half rights and obligations, which seem so natural in common life, are perfect absurdities in their tribunal; for which reason they are often oblig'd to take half arguments for whole ones, in order to terminate the affair one way or other.

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III. THE third argument of this kind I shall make use of may be explain'd thus. If we consider the ordinary course of human actions, we shall find, that the mind restrains not itself by any general and universal rules; but acts on most occasions as it is determin'd

PART determin'd by its present motives and incli-

II. nation. As each action is a particular individual event, it must proceed from particular principles, and from our immediate situation within ourselves, and with respect to the rest of the universe. If on some occasions we extend our motives beyond those very circumstances, which gave rise to them, and form something like *general rules* for our conduct, 'tis easy to observe, that these rules are not perfectly inflexible, but allow of many exceptions. Since, therefore, this is the ordinary course of human actions, we may conclude, that the laws of justice, being universal and perfectly inflexible, can never be deriv'd from nature, nor be the immediate offspring of any natural motive or inclination. No action can be either morally good or evil, unless there be some natural passion or motive to impel us to it, or deter us from it; and 'tis evident, that the morality must be susceptible of all the same variations, which are natural to the passion. Here are two persons, who dispute for an estate; of whom one is rich, a fool, and a batchelor; the other poor, a man of sense, and has a numerous family: The first is my enemy; the second my friend. Whether I be actuated in this affair

by

*Of justice
and in-
justice.*

by a view to public or private interest, by friendship or enmity, I must be induc'd to do my utmost to procure the estate to the latter. Nor wou'd any consideration of the right and property of the persons be able to restrain me, were I actuated only by natural motives, without any combination or convention with others. For as all property depends on morality; and as all morality depends on the ordinary course of our passions and actions; and as these again are only directed by particular motives; 'tis evident, such a partial conduct must be suitable to the strictest morality, and cou'd never be a violation of property. Were men, therefore, to take the liberty of acting with regard to the laws of society, as they do in every other affair, they wou'd conduct themselves, on most occasions, by particular judgments, and wou'd take into consideration the characters and circumstances of the persons, as well as the general nature of the question. But 'tis easy to observe, that this wou'd produce an infinite confusion in human society, and that the avidity and partiality of men wou'd quickly bring disorder into the world, if not restrain'd by some general and inflexible principles. 'Twas, therefore, with a view to this inconvenience,

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PART that men have establish'd those principles,
 II. and have agreed to restrain themselves by
 general rules, which are unchangeable by
 spite and favour, and by particular views of
 private or public interest. These rules, then,
 are artificially invented for a certain purpose,
 and are contrary to the common principles
 of human nature, which accommodate them-
 selves to circumstances, and have no stated
 invariable method of operation.

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and inju-
stice.*

NOR do I perceive how I can easily be
 mistaken in this matter. I see evidently, that
 when any man imposes on himself general
 inflexible rules in his conduct with others,
 he considers certain objects as their property,
 which he supposes to be sacred and inviolable.
 But no proposition can be more evident,
 than that property is perfectly unintelligible
 without first supposing justice and injustice;
 and that these, ~~virtues and vices~~ are as unin-
 telligible, unless we have motives, inde-
 pendent of the morality, to impel us to just
 actions, and deter us from unjust ones. Let
 those motives, therefore, be what they will,
 they must accommodate themselves to cir-
 cumstances, and must admit of all the vari-
 ations, which human affairs, in their in-
 cessant revolutions, are susceptible of. They
 are consequently a very improper foundation
 for

moral duties

for such rigid inflexible rules as the laws of SECT.
 nature ; and 'tis evident these laws can only VI.
 be deriv'd from human conventions, when
 men have perceiv'd the disorders that result
 from following their natural and variable
 principles.

Some farther reflections concerning justice and injustice.

UPON the whole, then, we are to consider this distinction betwixt justice and injustice, as having two different foundations, *viz.* that of *interest*, when men observe, that 'tis impossible to live in society without restraining themselves by certain rules ; and that of *morality*, when this interest is once observ'd, and men receive a pleasure from the view of such actions as tend to the peace of society, and an uneasiness from such as are contrary to it. 'Tis the voluntary convention and artifice of men, which makes the first interest take place ; and therefore those laws of justice are so far to be consider'd as *artificial*. After that interest is once establish'd and acknowledg'd, the sense of morality in the observance of these rules follows *naturally*, and of itself ; tho' 'tis certain, that it is also augmented by a new *artifice*, and that the public instructions of politicians, and the private education of parents, contribute to the giving a sense of

self

to be common to all mankind

us

PART honour and duty in the strict regulation of
 II. our actions with regard to the properties of
 others.

*Of justice
 and inju-
 stice.*

S E C T. VII.

Of the origin of government.

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 VII.

NOTHING is more certain, than that men are, in a great measure, govern'd by interest, and that even when they extend their concern beyond themselves, 'tis not to any great distance; nor is it usual for them, in common life, to look farther than their nearest friends and acquaintance. 'Tis no less certain, that 'tis impossible for men to consult their interest in so effectual a manner, as by an universal and inflexible observance of the rules of justice, by which alone they can preserve society, and keep themselves from falling into that wretched and savage condition, which is commonly represented as the *state of nature*. And as this interest, which all men have in the upholding of society, and the observation of the rules of justice, is great, so is it palpable and evident, even to the most rude and uncultivated of human race; and 'tis almost impossible for any

any one, who has had experience of society, S E C T. VII.
to be mistaken in this particular. Since,

therefore, men are so sincerely attach'd to
their interest, and their interest is so much
concern'd in the observance of justice, and *Of the origin of government.*

this interest is so certain and avow'd; it
may be ask'd, how any disorder can ever
arise in society, and what principle there is
in human nature so *powerful* as to overcome
so strong a passion, or so *violent* as to ob-
scure so clear a knowledge?

It has been observ'd, in treating of the
passions, that men are mightily govern'd by
the imagination, and proportion their affec-
tions more to the light, under which any
object appears to them, than to its real and
intrinsic value. What strikes upon them
with a strong and lively idea commonly pre-
vails above what lies in a more obscure light;
and it must be a great superiority of value,
that is able to compensate this advantage.
Now as every thing, that is contiguous to
us, either in space or time, strikes upon us
with such an idea, it has a proportional effect
on the will and passions, and commonly
operates with more force than any object,
that lies in a more distant and obscure light.
Tho' we may be fully convinc'd, that the
latter object excels the former, we are not

PART able to regulate our actions by this judg-

II. ment; but yield to the solicitations of our

Of justice and injustice. passions, which always plead in favour of whatever is near and contiguous.

THIS is the reason why men so often act in contradiction to their known interest; and in particular why they prefer any trivial advantage, that is present, to the maintenance of order in society, which so much depends on the observance of justice. The consequences of every breach of equity seem to lie very remote, and are not able to counterballance any immediate advantage, that may be reap'd from it. They are, however, never the less real for being remote; and as all men are, in some degree, subject to the same weakness, it necessarily happens, that the violations of equity must become very frequent in society, and the commerce of men, by that means, be render'd very dangerous and uncertain. You have the same propensity, that I have, in favour of what is contiguous above what is remote. You are, therefore, naturally carried to commit acts of injustice as well as me. Your example both pushes me forward in this way by imitation, and also affords me a new reason for any breach of equity, by shewing me, that I should be the cully of my integrity, if I alone

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alone shou'd impose on myself a severe re-
straint amidst the licentiousness of others.

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VII.

THIS quality, therefore, of human nature, not only is very dangerous to society, but also seems, on a cursory view, to be incapable of any remedy. The remedy can only come from the consent of men; and if men be incapable of themselves to prefer remote to contiguous, they will never consent to any thing, which wou'd oblige them to such a choice, and contradict, in so sensible a manner, their natural principles and propensities. Whoever chuses the means, chuses also the end; and if it be impossible for us to prefer what is remote, 'tis equally impossible for us to submit to any necessity, which wou'd oblige us to such a method of acting.

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origin of
government.

BUT here 'tis observable, that this infirmity of human nature becomes a remedy to itself, and that ~~we provide~~ against our negligence about remote objects, ~~merely because we are naturally inclin'd~~ to that negligence. When we consider any objects at a distance, all their minute distinctions vanish, and we always give the preference to whatever is in itself preferable, without considering its situation and circumstances. This gives rise to what in an improper sense we

the provisions
we make

& proceeds
merely from
our natural
inclination

PART call *reason*, which is a principle, that is often contradictory to those propensities that display themselves upon the approach of the object. In reflecting on any action, which I am to perform a twelve-month hence, I always resolve to prefer the greater good, whether at that time it will be more contiguous or remote; nor does any difference in that particular make a difference in my present intentions and resolutions. My distance from the final determination makes all those minute differences vanish, nor am I affected by any thing, but the general and more discernable qualities of good and evil. But on my nearer approach, those circumstances, which I at first over-look'd, begin to appear, and have an influence on my conduct and affections. A new inclination to the present good springs up, and makes it difficult for me to adhere inflexibly to my first purpose and resolution. This natural infirmity I may very much regret, and I may endeavour, by all possible means, to free myself from it. I may have recourse to study and reflection within myself; to the advice of friends; to frequent meditation, and repeated resolution: And having experienc'd how ineffectual all these are, I may embrace with pleasure any other expedient, by which

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Of justice
and injustice.

I may impose a restraint upon myself, and guard against this weakness. S E C T. VII.

THE only difficulty, therefore, is to find out this expedient, by which men cure their natural weakness, and lay themselves under the necessity of observing the laws of justice and equity, notwithstanding their violent propensity to prefer contiguous to remote. 'Tis evident such a remedy can never be effectual without correcting this propensity; and as 'tis impossible to change or correct any thing material in our nature, the utmost we can do is to change our circumstances and situation, and render the observance of the laws of justice our nearest interest, and their violation our most remote. But this being impracticable with respect to all mankind, it can only take place with respect to a few, whom we thus immediately interest in the execution of justice. These are the persons, whom we call civil magistrates, kings and their ministers, our governors and rulers, who being indifferent persons to the greatest part of the state, have no interest, or but a remote one, in any act of injustice; and being satisfied with their present condition, and with their part in society, have an immediate interest in every execution of justice, which is so necessary to the upholding of society.

PART society. Here then is the origin of civil government and ~~society~~.

Alliance

II.

*Of justice
and in-
justice.*

Men are not able radically to cure, either in themselves or others, that narrowness of soul, which makes them prefer the present to the remote. They cannot change their natures. All they can do is to change their situation, and render the observance of justice the immediate interest of some particular persons, and its violation their more remote. These persons, then, are not only induc'd to observe those rules in their own conduct, but also to constrain others to a like regularity, and enforce the dictates of equity thro' the whole society. And if it be necessary, they may also interest others more immediately in the execution of justice, and create a number of officers, civil and military, to assist them in their government.

BUT this execution of justice, tho' the principal, is not the only advantage of government. As ~~the~~ violent passions hinder men from seeing distinctly the interest they have in an equitable behaviour towards others; so it hinders them from seeing that equity itself, and gives them a remarkable partiality in their own favours. This inconvenience is corrected in the same manner as that above-mention'd. The same persons, who

who execute the laws of justice, will also SECT.
decide all controversies concerning them; VII.
and being indifferent to the greatest part of
the society, will decide them more equitably
than every one wou'd in his own case. Of the origin of government.

By means of these two advantages, in the
execution and *decision* of justice, men acquire
a security against each others weakness and
passion, as well as against their own, and
under the shelter of their governors, begin
to taste at ease the sweets of society and mu-
tual assistance. But government extends
farther its beneficial influence; and not con-
tented to protect men in those conventions
they make for their mutual interest, it often
obliges them to make such conventions, and
forces them to seek their own advantage, by
a concurrence in some common end or purpose.
There is no quality in human nature, which
causes more fatal errors in our conduct, than
that which leads us to prefer whatever is pre-
sent to the distant and remote, and makes us
desire objects more according to their situation
than their intrinsic value. Two neighbours
may agree to drain a meadow, which they
possess in common; because 'tis easy for
them to know each others mind; and each
must perceive, that the immediate conse-
quence of his failing in his part, is, the
abandoning

PART abandoning the whole project. But 'tis very

II. difficult, and indeed impossible, that a thousand persons shou'd agree in any such action; it being difficult for them to concert so complicated a design, and still more difficult for them to execute it; while each seeks a pretext to free himself of the trouble and expence, and wou'd lay the whole burden on others. Political society easily remedies both these inconveniences. Magistrates find an immediate interest in the interest of any considerable part of their subjects. They need consult no body but themselves to form any scheme for the promoting of that interest. And as the failure of any one piece in the execution is connected, tho' not immediately, with the failure of the whole, they prevent that failure, because they find no interest in it, either immediate or remote. Thus bridges are built; harbours open'd; ramparts rais'd; canals form'd; fleets equip'd; and armies disciplin'd; every where, by the care of government, which, tho' compos'd of men subject to all human infirmities, becomes, by one of the finest and most subtle inventions imaginable, a composition, *that* which is, in some measure, exempted from all these infirmities.

SECT.

S E C T. VIII.

Of the source of allegiance.

THOUGH government be an invention very advantageous, and even in some circumstances absolutely necessary to mankind; it is not necessary in all circumstances, nor is it impossible for men to preserve society for some time, without having recourse to such an invention. Men, 'tis true, are always much inclin'd to prefer present interest to distant and remote; nor is it easy for them to resist the temptation of any advantage, that they may immediately enjoy, in apprehension of an evil, that lies at a distance from them: But still this weakness is less conspicuous, where the possessions, and the pleasures of life are few, and of little value, as they always are in the infancy of society. An *Indian* is but little tempted to dispossess another of his hut, or to steal his bow, as being already provided of the same advantages; and as to any superior fortune, which may attend one above another in hunting and fishing, 'tis only casual and temporary, and will have but small tendency to

S E C T.
VIII.
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PART to disturb society. And so far am I from

II. thinking with some philosophers, that men  
*Of justice and injustice.* are utterly incapable of society without government, that I assert the first rudiments of government to arise from quarrels, not among men of the same society, but among those of different societies. A less degree of riches will suffice to this latter effect, than is requisite for the former. Men fear nothing from public war and violence but the resistance they meet with, which, because they share it in common, seems less terrible; and because it comes from strangers, seems less pernicious in its consequences, than when they are expos'd singly against one whose commerce is advantageous to them, and without whose society 'tis impossible they can subsist. Now foreign war to a society without government necessarily produces civil war. Throw any considerable goods among men, they instantly fall a quarrelling, while each strives to get possession of what pleases him, without regard to the consequences. In a foreign war the most considerable of all goods, life and limbs, are at stake; and as every one shuns dangerous posts, seizes the best arms, seeks excuse for the slightest wounds, ~~the laws~~, which may be well enough observ'd, while men were calm, can  
 now

*the rules of  
Society*

now no longer take place, when they are in SECT.  
such commotion. VIII.

Of the source of allegiance.  
THIS we find verified in the *American* tribes, where men live in concord and amity among themselves without any establish'd government; and never pay submission to any of their fellows, except in time of war, when their captain enjoys a shadow of authority, which he loses after their return from the field, and the establishment of peace with the neighbouring tribes. This authority, however, instructs them in the advantages of government, and teaches them to have recourse to it, when either by the pillage of war, by commerce, or by any fortuitous inventions, their riches and possessions have become so considerable, as to make them forget, on every emergence, the interest they have in the preservation of peace and justice. Hence we may give a plausible reason, among others, why all governments are at first monarchical, without any mixture and variety; and why republics arise only from the abuses of monarchy and despotic power. Camps are the true mothers of cities; and as war cannot be administered, by reason of the suddenness of every exigency, without some authority in a single person, the same kind of authority naturally takes



PART takes place in that civil government, which  
 II. succeeds the military. And this reason I  
 take to be more natural, than the common  
 one deriv'd from patriarchal government, or  
 the authority of a father, which is said first  
 to take place in one family, and to accustom  
 the members of it to the government of a  
 single person. The state of society without  
 government is one of the most natural states  
 of men, and ~~must~~ <sup>may</sup> subsist with the con-  
 junction of many families, and long after  
 the first generation. Nothing but an en-  
 crease of riches and possessions cou'd oblige  
 men to quit it; and so barbarous and unin-  
 structed are all societies on their first forma-  
 tion, that many years must elapse before  
 these ~~can~~ <sup>could</sup> encrease to such a degree, as to  
 disturb men in the enjoyment of peace and  
 concord.

BUT tho' it be possible for men to main-  
 tain a small uncultivated society without  
 government, 'tis impossible they shou'd main-  
 tain a society of any kind without justice,  
 and the observance of those three funda-  
 mental laws concerning the stability of pos-  
 session, its translation by consent, and the  
 performance of promises. These are, there-  
 fore, antecedent to government, and are  
 suppos'd to impose an obligation before the  
 duty

duty of allegiance to civil magistrates has SECT.  
once been thought of. Nay, I shall go far- VIII.

ther, and assert, that government, *upon its* Of the  
*first establishment*, wou'd naturally be sup- source of  
pos'd to derive its obligation from those laws allegiance.

of nature, and, in particular, from that concerning the performance of promises. When men have once perceiv'd the necessity of government to maintain peace, and execute justice, they wou'd naturally assemble together, wou'd chuse magistrates, determine their power, and *promise* them obedience.

As a promise is suppos'd to be a bond or security already in use, and attended with a moral obligation, 'tis to be consider'd as the original sanction of government, and as the source of the first obligation 'to obedience.

This reasoning appears so natural, that it has become the foundation of our fashionable system of politics, and is in a manner the creed of a party amongst us, who ~~pride~~ value themselves, with reason, on the soundness of their philosophy, and their liberty of thought.

*All men, say they, are born free and equal: Government and superiority can only be establish'd by consent: The consent of men, in establishing government, imposes on them a new obligation, unknown to the laws of nature. Men, therefore, are bound to obey their*

PART magistrates, only because they promise it; and

II. if they had not given their word, either expressly or tacitly, to preserve allegiance, it would never have become a part of their moral duty. This conclusion, however,

*Of justice  
and in-  
justice.*

*as soon as  
the advantages  
of Government  
are fully known  
and acknowledged,  
it immediately*

when carried so far as to comprehend government in all its ages and situations, is entirely erroneous; and I maintain, that tho' the duty of allegiance be at first grafted on the obligation of promises, and be for some time supported by that obligation, yet ~~it quickly~~ takes root of itself, and has an original obligation and authority, independent of all contracts. This is a principle of moment, which we must examine with care and attention, before we proceed any farther.

'Tis reasonable for those philosophers, who assert justice to be a natural virtue, and antecedent to human conventions, to resolve all civil allegiance into the obligation of a promise, and assert that 'tis our own consent alone, which binds us to any submission to magistracy. For as all government is plainly an invention of men, and the origin of most governments is known in history, 'tis necessary to mount higher, in order to find the source of our political duties, if we wou'd assert them to have any natural obligation of morality. These philosophers,



losophers, therefore, quickly observe, that SECT. society is as antient as the human species, VIII. and those three fundamental laws of nature as antient as society: So that taking advantage of the antiquity, and obscure origin of these laws, they first deny them to be artificial and voluntary inventions of men, and then seek to ingraft on them those other duties, which are more plainly artificial. But being once undeceiv'd in this particular, and having found that *natural*, as well as *civil* justice, derives its origin from human conventions, we shall quickly perceive, how fruitless it is to resolve the one into the other, and seek, in the laws of nature, a stronger foundation for our political duties than interest, and human conventions; while these laws themselves are built on the very same foundation. On which ever side we turn this subject, we shall find, that these two kinds of duty are exactly on the same footing, and have the same source both of their *first invention* and *moral obligation*. They are contriv'd to remedy like inconveniences, and acquire their moral sanction in the same manner, from their remedying those inconveniences. These are two points, which ~~we~~ we shall endeavour to prove as distinctly as possible.

*Of the  
source of  
allegiance.*

PART

II.

*Of justice  
and injus-  
tice.*

WE have already shewn, that men *invented* the three fundamental laws of nature, when they observ'd the necessity of society to their mutual subsistence, and found, that 'twas impossible to maintain any correspondence together, without some restraint on their natural appetites. The same self-love, therefore, which renders men so incommo-  
dious to each other, taking a new and more convenient direction, produces the rules of justice, and is the *first* motive of their observance. But when men have observ'd, that tho' the rules of justice be sufficient to maintain any society, yet 'tis impossible for them, of themselves, to observe those rules, in large and polish'd societies; they establish government, as a new invention to attain their ends, and preserve the old, or procure new advantages, by a more strict execution of justice. So far, therefore, our *civil* duties are connected with our *natural*, that the former are invented chiefly for the sake of the latter; and that the principal object of government is to constrain men to observe the laws of nature. In this respect, however, that law of nature, concerning the performance of promises, is only compriz'd along with the rest; and its exact observance is to be consider'd as an effect of the institution

tution of government, and not the obedience SECT. VIII.  
to government as an effect of the obligation

of a promise. Tho' the object of our civil duties be the enforcing of our natural, yet <sup>*Of the source of allegiance.*</sup> the <sup>\*</sup>first motive of the invention, as well

as performance of both, is nothing but self-interest: And since there is a separate interest in the obedience to government, from that in the performance of promises, we must also allow of a separate obligation. To obey the civil magistrate is requisite to preserve order and concord in society. To perform promises is requisite to beget mutual trust and confidence in the common offices of life. The ends, as well as the means, are perfectly distinct; nor is the one subordinate to the other.

To make this more evident, let us consider, that men will often bind themselves by promises to the performance of what it wou'd have been their interest to perform, independent of these promises; as when they wou'd give others a fuller security, by super-adding a new obligation of interest to that which they formerly lay under. The interest in the performance of promises, besides its moral obligation, is general, avow'd, and of the last consequence in life. Other

L 3 interests

\* First in time, not in dignity or force.



PART interests may be more particular and doubtful; and we are apt to entertain a greater  
 II. suspicion, that men may indulge their humour, or passion, in acting contrary to them. Here, therefore, promises come naturally in play, and are often requir'd for fuller satisfaction and security. But supposing those other interests to be as general and avow'd as the interest in the performance of a promise, they will be regarded as on the same footing, and men will begin to repose the same confidence in them. Now this is exactly the case with regard to our civil duties, or obedience to the magistrate; without which no government cou'd subsist, nor any peace or order be maintain'd in large societies, where there are so many possessions on the one hand, and so many wants, real or imaginary, on the other. Our civil duties, therefore, must soon detach themselves from our promises, and acquire a separate force and influence. The interest in both is of the very same kind: 'Tis general, avow'd, and prevails in all times and places. There is, then, no pretext of reason for founding the one upon the other; while each of them has a foundation peculiar to itself. We might as well resolve the obligation to abstain from the possessions of others, into the

*Of justice  
and injustice.*

the obligation of a promise, as that of allegiance. The interests are not more distinct in the one case than the other. A regard to property is not more necessary to natural society, than obedience is to civil society or government; nor is the former society more necessary to the being of mankind, than the latter to their well-being and happiness. In short, if the performance of promises be advantageous, so is obedience to government: If the former interest be general, so is the latter: If the one interest be obvious and avow'd, so is the other. And as these two rules are founded on like obligations of interest, each of them must have a peculiar authority, independent of the other.

BUT 'tis not only the *natural* obligations of interest, which are distinct in promises and allegiance; but also the *moral* obligations of honour and conscience: Nor does the merit or demerit of the one depend in the least upon that of the other. And indeed, if we consider the close connexion there is betwixt the natural and moral obligations, we shall find this conclusion to be entirely unavoidable. Our interest is always engag'd on the side of obedience to magistracy; and there is nothing but a great present advantage, that can lead us to rebellion,

PART by making us over-look the remote interest,

II. which we have in the preserving of peace and order in society. But tho' a present interest may thus blind us with regard to our own actions, it takes not place with regard to those of others; nor hinders them from appearing in their true colours, as highly prejudicial to ~~public interest, and to our own~~

*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.*

*our own Interest,  
or at least to  
that of the  
public, which  
we partake  
of by Sympathy*

~~in particular.~~ This naturally gives us an uneasiness, in considering such seditious and disloyal actions, and makes us attach to them the idea of vice and moral deformity. 'Tis the same principle, which causes us to disapprove of all kinds of private injustice, and in particular of the breach of promises. We blame all treachery and breach of faith; because we consider, that the freedom and extent of human commerce depend entirely on a fidelity with regard to promises. We blame all disloyalty to magistrates; because we perceive, that the execution of justice, in the stability of possession, its translation by consent, and the performance of promises, is impossible, without submission to government. As there are here two interests entirely distinct from each other, they must give rise to two moral obligations, equally separate and independant. Tho' there was no such thing as a promise in the world, government



vernment wou'd still be necessary in all large **SECT.**  
 and civiliz'd societies; and if promises had **VIII.**  
 only their own proper obligation, without *Of the*  
 the separate sanction of government, they *source of*  
 wou'd have but little efficacy in such soci- *allegiance.*  
 eties. This separates the boundaries of our  
 public and private duties, and shews that  
 the latter are more dependant on the former,  
 than the former on the latter. *Education,*  
 and *the artifice of politicians,* concur to be- *in*  
 stow a farther morality on loyalty, and ~~th~~ *ing*  
 brand all rebellion with a greater degree of *ing*  
 guilt and infamy. Nor is it a wonder, that  
 politicians shou'd be very industrious in in-  
 culcating such notions, where their interest  
 is so particularly concern'd.

**LEST** those arguments shou'd not appear  
 entirely conclusive (as I think they are) I  
 shall have recourse to authority, and shall  
 prove, from the universal consent of man-  
 kind, that the obligation of submission to  
 government is not deriv'd from any promise  
 of the subjects. Nor need any one wonder,  
 that tho' I have all along endeavour'd to  
 establish my system on pure reason, and have  
 scarce ever cited the judgment even of phi-  
 losophers or historians on any article, I shou'd  
 now appeal to popular authority, and oppose  
 the sentiments of the rabble to any philoso-  
 phical

PART phical reasoning. But it must be observ'd,

II. that the opinions of men, in this case, carry with them a peculiar authority, and are, in a great measure, infallible. The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain, which results from the view of any sentiment, or character; and as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows, <sup>a</sup> that there is just so much vice or virtue in any character, as every one places in it, and that 'tis impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken. And tho' our judgments concerning the *origin* of any vice or virtue, be not so certain as those concerning their *degrees*; yet, since the question in this case regards not any philosophical origin of an obligation, but a plain matter of fact, 'tis not easily conceiv'd how we can fall into an error. A man, who acknowledges himself to be bound to another, for a certain sum, must certainly know whether it be by his own bond, or that of his father; whether it be of his mere good-will, or for money lent him;

<sup>a</sup> This proposition must hold strictly true, with regard to every quality, that is determin'd merely by sentiment. In what sense we can talk either of a *right* or a *wrong* taste in morals, eloquence, or beauty, shall be consider'd afterwards. In the mean time, it may be observ'd, that there is such an uniformity in the *general* sentiments of mankind, as to render such questions of but small importance.

him; and under what conditions, and for SECT.  
what purposes he has bound himself. In VIII.  
like manner, it being certain, that there is  
a moral obligation to submit to government,  
because every one thinks so; it must be as  
certain, that this obligation arises not from a  
promise; since no one, whose judgment has  
not been led astray by too strict adherence  
to a system of philosophy, has ever yet  
dreamt of ascribing it to that origin. Neither  
magistrates nor subjects have form'd this  
idea of our civil duties.

*Of the  
source of  
allegiance.*

WE find, that magistrates are so far from  
deriving their authority, and the obligation  
to obedience in their subjects, from the foun-  
dation of a promise or original contract,  
that they conceal, as far as possible, from  
their people, especially from the vulgar, that  
they have their origin from thence. Were  
this the sanction of government, our rulers  
wou'd never receive it tacitly, which is the  
utmost that can be pretended; since what is  
given tacitly and insensibly can never have  
such influence on mankind, as what is per-  
form'd expressly and openly. A tacit pro-  
mise is, where the will is signified by other  
more diffuse signs than those of speech; but  
a will there must certainly be in the case,  
and that can never escape the person's no-  
tice,



PART

II.

*Of justice  
and in-  
justice.*

tice, who exerted it, however silent or tacit. But were you to ask the far greatest part of the nation, whether they had ever consented to the authority of their rulers, or promis'd to obey them, they wou'd be inclin'd to think very strangely of you; and wou'd certainly reply, that the affair depended not on their consent, but that they were born to such an obedience. In consequence of this opinion, we frequently see them imagine such persons to be their natural rulers, as are at that time depriv'd of all power and authority, and whom no man, however foolish, wou'd voluntarily chuse; and this merely because they are in that line, which rul'd before, and in that degree of it, which us'd to succeed; tho' perhaps in so distant a period, that scarce any man alive cou'd ever have given any promise of obedience. Has a government, then, no authority over such as these, because they never consented to it, and wou'd esteem the very attempt of such a free choice a piece of arrogance and impiety? We find by experience, that it punishes them very freely for what it calls treason and rebellion, which, it seems, according to this system, reduces itself to common injustice. If you say, that by dwelling in its dominions, they in effect consented to the

the establish'd government; I answer, that SECT.  
this can only be, where they think the affair VIII.  
depends on their choice, which few or none, *Of the*  
beside those philosophers, have ever yet *source of*  
imagin'd. It never was pleaded as an ex- *allegiance.*  
cuse for a rebel, that the first act he per-  
form'd, after he came to years of discretion,  
was to levy war against the sovereign of  
the state; and that while he was a child he  
cou'd not bind himself by his own consent,  
and having become a man, shou'd plainly,  
by the first act he perform'd, that he had no  
design to impose on himself any obligation  
to obedience. We find, on the contrary,  
that civil laws punish this crime at the same  
age as any other, which is criminal, of it-  
self, without our consent; that is, when the  
person is come to the full use of reason:  
Whereas to this crime <sup>they</sup> ~~it~~ ought in justice  
to allow some intermediate time, in which  
a tacit consent at least might be suppos'd.  
To which we may add, that a man living  
under an absolute government, wou'd owe  
it no allegiance; since, by its very nature,  
it depends not on consent. But as that is  
as *natural* and *common* a government as any,  
it must certainly occasion some obligation;  
and 'tis plain from experience, that men,  
who are subjected to it, do always think  
so.

PART so. This is a clear proof, that we do not  
 II. commonly esteem our allegiance to be de-  
 riv'd from our consent or promise; and a  
 farther proof is, that when our promise is  
 upon any account expressly engag'd, we al-  
 ways distinguish exactly betwixt the two  
 obligations, and believe the one to add more  
 force to the other, than in a repetition of  
 the same promise. Where no promise is  
 given, a man looks not on his faith as bro-  
 ken in private matters, upon account of  
 rebellion; but keeps those two duties of  
 honour and allegiance perfectly distinct and  
 separate. As the uniting of them was  
 thought by these philosophers a very subtle  
 invention, this is a convincing proof, that  
 'tis not a true one; since no man can either  
 give a promise, or be restrain'd by its sanc-  
 tion and obligation unknown to himself.

## S E C T. IX.

*Of the measures of allegiance.*

SECT. IX. **T**HOSE political writers, who have  
 had recourse to a promise, or origi-  
 nal contract, as the source of our allegiance  
 to government, intended to establish a prin-  
 ciple, which is perfectly just and reasonable;  
 tho'



tho' the reasoning, upon which they endeavour'd to establish it, was fallacious and sophistical. They wou'd prove, that our submission to government admits of exceptions, and that an egregious tyranny in the rulers is sufficient to free the subjects from all ties of allegiance. Since men enter into society, say they, and submit themselves to government, by their free and voluntary consent, they must have in view certain advantages, which they propose to reap from it, and for which they are contented to resign their native liberty. There is, therefore, something mutual engag'd on the part of the magistrate, *viz.* protection and security; and 'tis only by the hopes he affords of these advantages, that he can ever persuade men to submit to him. But when instead of protection and security, they meet with tyranny and oppression, they are free'd from their promises, (as happens in all conditional contracts) and return to that state of liberty, which preceded the institution of government. Men wou'd never be so foolish as to enter into such engagements as shou'd turn entirely to the advantage of others, without any view of bettering their own condition. Whoever proposes to draw any profit from our submission, must engage himself, either expressly

SECT.  
IX.*Of the  
measures  
of alle-  
giance.*

PART expressly or tacitly, to make us reap some  
 II. advantage from his authority; nor ought he  
 to expect, that without the performance of  
 his part we will ever continue in obedience.

*Of justice  
 and injus-  
 tice.*

I REPEAT it: This conclusion is just, tho' the principles be erroneous; and I flatter myself, that I can establish the same conclusion on more reasonable principles. I shall not take such a compass, in establishing our political duties, as to assert, that men perceive the advantages of government; that they institute government with a view to those advantages; that this institution requires a promise of obedience; which imposes a moral obligation to a certain degree, but being conditional, ceases to be binding, whenever the other contracting party performs not his part of the engagement. I perceive, that a promise itself arises entirely from human conventions, and is invented with a view to a certain interest. I seek, therefore, some such interest more immediately connected with government, and which may be at once the original motive to its institution, and the source of our obedience to it. This interest I find to consist in the security and protection, which we enjoy in political society, and which we can never attain, when perfectly free and independent.

As

As ~~the~~ interest, therefore, is the immediate S E C T.  
function of government, the one can have IX.  
no longer being than the other; and when-  
ever the civil magistrate carries his oppression *Of the*  
so far as to render his authority perfectly *measures*  
intolerable, we are no longer bound to sub- *of alle-*  
mit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must *giance.*  
cease also.

So far the conclusion is immediate and direct, concerning the *natural* obligation which we have to allegiance. As to the *moral* obligation, we may observe, that the maxim wou'd here be false, that *when the cause ceases, the effect must cease also*. For there is a principle of human nature, which we have frequently taken notice of, that men are mightily addicted to *general rules*, and that we often carry our maxims beyond those reasons, which first induc'd us to establish them. Where cases are similar in many circumstances, we are apt to put them on the same footing, without considering, that they differ in the most material circumstances, and that the resemblance is more apparent than real. It may, therefore, be thought, that in the case of allegiance our moral obligation of duty will not cease, even tho' the natural obligation of interest, which is its cause, has ceas'd; and



PART that men may be bound by *conscience* to

II. submit to a tyrannical government against  
*Of justice*  
*and inju-*  
*stice.* their own and the public interest. And  
indeed, to the force of this argument I so far  
submit, as to acknowledge, that general  
rules commonly extend beyond the prin-  
ciples, on which they are founded; and  
that we seldom make any exception to them,  
unless that exception have the qualities of a  
general rule, and be founded on very nu-  
merous and common instances. Now this  
I assert to be entirely the present case.  
When men submit to the authority of  
others, 'tis to procure themselves some secu-  
rity against the wickedness and injustice of  
men, who are perpetually carried, by their  
unruly passions, and by their present and  
immediate interest, to the violation of all  
the laws of society. But as this imperfection  
is inherent in human nature, we know that  
it must attend men in all their states and  
conditions; and that those, whom we chuse  
for rulers, do not immediately become of a  
superior nature to the rest of mankind, upon  
account of their superior power and autho-  
rity. What we expect from them depends not  
on a change of their nature but of their situ-  
ation, when they acquire a more immediate  
interest in the preservation of order and the  
execution

execution of justice. But besides that this S E C T. IX.  
 interest is only more immediate in the ex-

ecution of justice among their subjects; be- Of the not in  
measures disputes  
of alle-  
giance. betwixt  
themselves  
and subjects.  
 sides this, I say, we may often expect, from  
 the irregularity of human nature, that they  
 will neglect even this immediate interest, and  
 be transported by their passions into all the  
 excesses of cruelty and ambition. Our ge-  
 neral knowledge of human nature, our ob-  
 servation of the past history of mankind,  
 our experience of present times; all these  
 causes must induce us to open the door to  
 exceptions, and must make us conclude,  
 that we may resist the more violent effects  
 of supreme power, without any crime or  
 injustice.

ACCORDINGLY we may observe, that  
 this is both the general practice and principle  
 of mankind, and that no nation, that cou'd  
 find any remedy, ever yet suffer'd the cruel  
 ravages of a tyrant, or were blam'd for their  
 resistance. Those who took up arms against  
*Dionysius* or *Nero*, or *Philip the second*, have  
 the favour of every reader in the perusal of  
 their history; and nothing but the most  
 violent perversion of common sense can ever  
 lead us to condemn them. 'Tis certain,  
 therefore, that in all our notions of morals  
 we never entertain such an absurdity as that

PART of passive obedience, but make allowances

II. for resistance in the more flagrant instances  
 of tyranny and oppression. The general  
 opinion of mankind has some authority in  
 all cases; but in this of morals 'tis perfectly  
 infallible. Nor is it less infallible, because  
 men cannot distinctly explain the principles,  
 on which it is founded. Few persons can  
 carry on this train of reasoning: "Govern-  
 "ment is a mere human invention for the  
 "interest of society. Where the tyranny  
 "of the governor removes this interest, it  
 "also removes the natural obligation to obe-  
 "dience. The moral obligation is founded  
 "on the natural, and therefore must cease  
 "where *that* ceases; especially where the  
 "subject is such as makes us foresee very  
 "many occasions wherein the natural obli-  
 "gation may cease, and causes us to form  
 "a kind of general rule for the regulation  
 "of our conduct in such occurrences." But  
 tho' this train of reasoning be too subtile for  
 the vulgar, 'tis certain, that all men have an  
 implicit notion of it, and are sensible, that  
 they owe obedience to government merely  
 on account of the public interest; and at  
 the same time, that human nature is so  
 subject to frailties and passions, as may  
 easily pervert this institution, and change  
 their

*Of justice  
 and inju-  
 stice.*



their governors into tyrants and public ene- S E C T.  
mies. If the sense of <sup>common</sup> ~~public~~ interest were IX.  
not our original motive to obedience, I <sup>Of the</sup>  
wou'd fain ask, what other principle is there <sup>measures</sup>  
in human nature capable of subduing the <sup>of alle-</sup>  
natural ambition of men, and forcing them <sup>giance.</sup>  
to such a submission? Imitation and custom  
are not sufficient. For the question still re-  
curs, what motive first produces those in-  
stances of submission, which we imitate, and  
that train of actions, which produces the  
custom? There evidently is no other prin-  
ciple than <sup>common</sup> ~~public~~ interest; and if interest  
first produces obedience to government, the  
obligation to obedience must cease, when-  
ever the interest ceases, in any great degree,  
and in a considerable number of instances.

S E C T. X.

*Of the objects of allegiance.*

BUT tho', on some occasions, it may be S E C T.  
justifiable, both in sound politics and X.  
morality, to resist supreme power, 'tis cer-  
tain, that in the ordinary course of human  
affairs nothing can be more pernicious and  
criminal; and that besides the convulsions,

PART which always attend revolutions, such a  
 II. practice tends directly to the subversion of  
 all government, and the causing an universal  
 anarchy and confusion among mankind. As  
 numerous and civiliz'd societies cannot sub-  
 sist without government, so government is  
 entirely useless without an exact obedience.  
 We ought always to weigh the advantages,  
 which we reap from authority, against the  
 disadvantages; and by this means we shall  
 become more scrupulous of putting in prac-  
 tice the doctrine of resistance. The com-  
 mon rule requires submission; and 'tis only  
 in cases of grievous tyranny and oppression,  
 that the exception can take place.

*Of justice  
 and inju-  
 stice.*

SINCE then such a blind submission is  
 commonly due to magistracy, the next  
 question is, *to whom it is due, and whom we  
 are to regard as our lawful magistrates?*  
 In order to answer this question, let us re-  
 collect what we have already establish'd con-  
 cerning the origin of government and poli-  
 tical society. When men have once experi-  
 enc'd the impossibility of preserving any  
 steady order in society, while every one is his  
 own master, and violates or observes the laws  
 of ~~interest~~ <sup>society</sup> according to his present interest  
 or pleasure, they naturally run into the in-  
 vention of government, and put it out of  
 their

their own power, as far as possible, to trans-  
gress the ~~laws of society~~. Government,  
therefore, arises from the voluntary conven-  
tion of men; and 'tis evident, that the same  
convention, which establishes government,  
will also determine the persons who are to  
govern, and will remove all doubt and am-  
biguity in this particular. And the volun-  
tary consent of men must here have the  
greater efficacy, that the authority of the  
magistrate does *at first* stand upon the foun-  
dation of a promise of the subjects, by  
which they bind themselves to obedience; as  
in every other contract or engagement. The  
same promise, then, which binds them to  
obedience, ties them down to a particular  
person, and makes him the object of their  
allegiance.

BUT when government has been establish'd  
on this footing for some considerable time,  
and the separate interest, which we have in  
submission, has produc'd a separate senti-  
ment of morality, the case is entirely alter'd,  
and a promise is no longer able to determine  
the particular magistrate; since it is no  
longer consider'd as the foundation of go-  
vernment. We naturally suppose ourselves  
born to submission; and imagine, that such  
particular persons have a right to command,

S E C T.  
X.Of the  
objects of  
allegiance.Rules  
of  
Justice



PART as we on our part are bound to obey.

II. These notions of right and obligation are deriv'd from nothing but the *advantage* ~~we~~ reap from government, which gives us a repugnance to practise resistance ourselves, and makes us displeas'd with any instance of it in others. But here 'tis remarkable, that in this new state of affairs, the original sanction of government, which is *interest*, is not admitted to determine the persons, whom we are to obey, as the original sanction did at first, when affairs were on the footing of a *promise*. A *promise* fixes and determines the persons, without any uncertainty: But 'tis evident, that if men were to regulate their conduct in this particular, by the view of a peculiar *interest*, either public or private, they wou'd involve themselves in endless confusion, and wou'd render all government, in a great measure, ineffectual. The private interest of every one is different; and tho' the public interest in itself be always one and the same, yet it becomes the source of as great dissensions, by reason of the different opinions of particular persons concerning it. The same interest, therefore, which causes us to submit to magistracy, makes us renounce itself in the choice of our magistrates, and binds us  
down

down to a certain form of government; and S E C T.  
to particular persons, without allowing us to X.

aspire to the utmost perfection in either. *Of the objects of allegiance.*  
The case is here the same as in that law of nature concerning the stability of possession. 'Tis highly advantageous, and even absolutely necessary to society, that possession shou'd be stable; and this leads us to the establishment of such a rule: But we find, that were we to follow the same advantage, in assigning particular possessions to particular persons, we shou'd disappoint our end, and perpetuate the confusion, which that rule is intended to prevent. We must, therefore, proceed by general rules, and regulate ourselves by general interests, in modifying the law of nature concerning the stability of possession. Nor need we fear, that our attachment to this law will diminish upon account of the seeming frivolousness of those interests, by which it is determin'd. The impulse of the mind is deriv'd from a very strong interest; and those other more minute interests serve only to direct the motion, without adding any thing to it, or diminishing from it. 'Tis the same case with government. Nothing is more advantageous to society than such an invention; and this interest is sufficient to make us embrace

PART brace it with ardour and alacrity; tho' we

II. are oblig'd afterwards to regulate and direct our devotion to government by several considerations, which are not of the same importance, and to chuse our magistrates without having in view any particular advantage from the choice.

*Of justice  
and injustice.*

THE *first* of those principles I shall take notice of, as a foundation of the right of magistracy, is that which gives authority to, *almost* all the ~~most~~ establish'd governments of the world ~~without exception~~: I mean, *long possession* in any one form of government, or succession of princes. 'Tis certain, that if we remount to the first origin of every nation, we shall find, that there scarce is any race of kings, or form of a commonwealth, that is not primarily founded on usurpation and rebellion, and whose title is not at first worse than doubtful and uncertain. Time alone gives solidity to their right; and operating gradually on the minds of men, reconciles them to any authority, and makes it seem just and reasonable. Nothing causes any sentiment to have a greater influence upon us than custom, or turns our imagination more strongly to any object. When we have been long accustom'd to obey any set of men, that general instinct or tendency, which



which we have to suppose a moral obligation SECT.  
attending loyalty, takes easily this direction, X.  
and chuses that set of men for its objects. Of the  
'Tis interest which gives the general instinct; objects of  
but 'tis custom which gives the particular allegiance.  
direction.

AND here 'tis observable, that the same length of time has a different influence on our sentiments of morality, according to its different influence on the mind. We naturally judge of every thing by comparison; and since in considering the fate of kingdoms and republics, we embrace a long extent of time, a small duration has not in this case a like influence on our sentiments, as when we consider any other object. One thinks he acquires a right to a horse, or a suit of cloaths, in a very short time; but a century is scarce sufficient to establish any new government, or remove all scruples in the minds of the subjects concerning it. Add to this, that a shorter period of time will suffice to give a prince a title to any additional power he may usurp, than will serve to fix his right, where the whole is an usurpation. The kings of *France* have not been possess'd of absolute power for above two reigns; and yet nothing will appear more extravagant to *Frenchmen* than to talk  
of

PART of their liberties. If we consider what has

II. been said concerning *accession*, we shall easily account for this phenomenon.

*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.*

WHEN there is no form of government establish'd by *long* possession, the *present* possession is sufficient to supply its place, and may be regarded as the *second* source of all public authority. Right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority, maintain'd by the laws of society and the interests of mankind; and nothing can be more natural than to join this constant possession to the present one, according to the principles above-mention'd. If the same principles did not take place with regard to the property of private persons, 'twas because these principles were counter-ballanc'd by very strong considerations of interest; when we observ'd, that all restitution wou'd by that means be prevented, and every violence be authoriz'd and protected. And tho' the same motives may seem to have force, with regard to public authority, yet they are oppos'd by a contrary interest; which consists in the preservation of peace, and the avoiding of all changes, which, however they may be easily produc'd in private affairs, are unavoidably attended with bloodshed

shed and confusion, where the public is interested. S E C T.  
X.

ANY one, who finding the impossibility of accounting for the right of the present possessor, by any receiv'd system of ethics, shou'd resolve to deny absolutely that right, and assert, that it is not authoriz'd by morality, wou'd be justly thought to maintain a very extravagant paradox, and to shock the common sense and judgment of mankind. No maxim is more conformable, both to prudence and morals, than to submit quietly to the government, which we find establish'd in the country where we happen to live, without enquiring too curiously into its origin and first establishment. Few governments will bear being examin'd so rigorously. How many kingdoms are there at present in the world, and how many more do we find in history, whose governors have no better foundation for their authority than that of present possession? To confine ourselves to the *Roman* and *Grecian* empire; is it not evident, that the long succession of emperors, from the dissolution of the *Roman* liberty, to the final extinction of that empire by the *Turks*, cou'd not so much as pretend to any other title to the empire? The election of the senate was a mere form, which always follow'd



PART follow'd the choice of the legions ; and  
 II. these were almost always divided in the different provinces, and nothing but the sword was able to terminate the difference. 'Twas by the sword, therefore, that every emperor acquir'd, as well as defended his right ; and we must either say, that all the known world, for so many ages, had no government, and ow'd no allegiance to any one, or must allow, that the right of the stronger, in public affairs, is to be receiv'd as legitimate, and authoriz'd by morality, when not oppos'd by any other title.

*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.*

THE right of *conquest* may be consider'd as a *third* source of the title of sovereigns. This right resembles very much that of present possession ; but has rather a superior force, being seconded by the notions of glory and honour, which we ascribe to *conquerors*, instead of the sentiments of hatred and detestation, which attend *usurpers*. Men naturally favour those they love ; and therefore are more apt to ascribe a right to successful violence, betwixt one sovereign and another, than to the successful rebellion of a subject against his sovereign <sup>a</sup>.

WHEN

<sup>a</sup> It is not here asserted, that *present possession* or *conquest* are sufficient to give a title against *long possession* and *positive laws*: But only that they have some force, and will be

WHEN neither long possession, nor pre-  
 sent possession, nor conquest take place, as  
 when the first sovereign, who founded any  
 monarchy, dies; in that case, the right of  
*succession* naturally prevails in their stead,  
 and men are commonly induc'd to place the  
 son of their late monarch on the throne,  
 and suppose him to inherit his father's  
 authority. The presum'd consent of the fa-  
 ther, the imitation of the succession to pri-  
 vate families, the interest, which the state  
 has in chusing the person, who is most power-  
 ful, and has the most numerous followers;  
 all these reasons lead men to prefer the son of  
 their late monarch to any other person<sup>b</sup>.

THESE reasons have some weight; but  
 I am persuaded, that to one, who considers  
 impartially of the matter, 'twill appear, that  
~~there concur~~ some principles of the imagina-  
 tion, <sup>concur</sup> along with those views of interest.  
 The royal authority seems to be connected  
 with the young prince even in his father's  
 life-

*Of the  
 objects of  
 allegiance.*

*justice and*

be able to cast the ballance where the titles are otherwise equal,  
 and will even be sufficient *sometimes* to sanctify the weaker  
 title. What degree of force they have is difficult to deter-  
 mine. I believe all moderate men will allow, that they have  
 great force in all disputes concerning the rights of princes.

<sup>b</sup> To prevent mistakes I must observe, that this case of  
 succession is not the same with that of hereditary monarchies,  
 where custom has fix'd the right of succession. These depend  
 upon the principle of long possession above explain'd.

PART life-time, by the natural transition of the  
 II. thought; and still more after his death: So  
 that nothing is more natural than to complete this union by a new relation, and by putting him actually in possession of what seems so naturally to belong to him.

*Of justice  
 and injustice.*

To confirm this we may weigh the following phenomena, which are pretty curious in their kind. In elective monarchies the right of succession has no place by the laws and settled custom; and yet its influence is so natural, that 'tis impossible entirely to exclude it from the imagination, and render the subjects indifferent to the son of their deceased monarch. Hence in some governments of this kind, the choice commonly falls on one or other of the royal family; and in some governments they are all excluded. Those contrary phenomena proceed from the same principle. Where the royal family is excluded, 'tis from a refinement in politics, which makes people sensible of their propensity to chuse a sovereign in that family, and gives them a jealousy of their liberty, lest their new monarch, aided by this propensity, should establish his family, and destroy the freedom of elections for the future.



THE history of *Artaxerxes*, and the SECT. X.  
younger *Cyrus*, may furnish us with some  
reflections to the same purpose. *Cyrus* pre-

tended a right to the throne above his elder brother, because he was born after his father's accession. I do not pretend, that this reason was valid. I wou'd only infer from it, that he wou'd never have made use of such a pretext, were it not for the qualities of the imagination above-mention'd, by which we are naturally inclin'd to unite by a new relation whatever objects we find already united. *Artaxerxes* had an advantage above his brother, as being the eldest son, and the first in succession: But *Cyrus* was more closely related to the royal authority, as being begot after his father was invested with it.

SHOU'D it here be pretended, that the view of convenience may be the source of all the right of succession, and that men gladly take advantage of any rule, by which they can fix the successor of their late sovereign, and prevent that anarchy and confusion, which attends all new elections: To this I wou'd answer, ~~that I readily allow,~~ that this motive may contribute <sup>what</sup> something to the effect; but ~~at the same time I assert,~~ that without another principle, 'tis impossible

*perhaps*

PART such a motive shou'd take place. The in-

II. terest of a nation requires, that the suc-

*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.*

cession to the crown shou'd be fix'd one way or other; but 'tis the same thing to its interest in what way it be fix'd: So that if the relation of blood had not an effect independent of public interest, it wou'd never have been regarded, without a positive law; and 'twou'd have been impossible, that so many positive laws of different nations cou'd ever have concur'd precisely in the same views and intentions.

THIS leads us to consider the *fifth* source of authority, viz. *positive laws*; when the legislature establishes a certain form of government and succession of princes. At first sight it may be thought, that this must resolve into some of the preceding titles of authority. The legislative power, whence the positive law is deriv'd, must either be establish'd by original contract, long possession, present possession, conquest, or succession; and consequently the positive law must derive its force from some of those principles. But here 'tis remarkable, that tho' a positive law can only derive its force from these principles, yet it acquires not all the force of the principle from whence it is deriv'd, but loses considerably in the transi-

tion;

tion; as it is natural to imagine. For in-  
 stance; a government is establish'd for many  
 centuries on a certain system of laws, forms,  
 and methods of succession. The legislative  
 power, establish'd by this long succession,  
 changes all on a sudden the whole system of  
 government, and introduces a new constitu-  
 tion in its stead. I believe few of the sub-  
 jects will think themselves bound to comply  
 with this alteration, unless it have an evi-  
 dent tendency to the public good: But will  
 think themselves still at liberty to return to  
 the antient government. Hence the notion  
 of *fundamental laws*; which are suppos'd to  
 be inalterable by the will of the sovereign:  
 And of this nature the *Salic law* is under-  
 stood to be in *France*. How far these funda-  
 mental laws extend is not determin'd in any  
 government; nor is it possible it ever shou'd.  
 There is such an insensible gradation from  
 the most material laws to the most trivial,  
 and from the most antient laws to the most  
 modern, that 'twill be impossible to set  
 bounds to the legislative power, and deter-  
 mine how far it may innovate in the prin-  
 ciples of government. That is the work  
 more of imagination and passion than of  
 reason.

SECT.

X.

Of the  
objects of  
allegiance.



## PART

## II.

*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.*

WHOEVER considers the history of the several nations of the world; their revolutions, conquests, increase, and diminution; the manner in which their particular governments are establish'd, and the successive right transmitted from one person to another, will soon learn to treat very lightly all disputes concerning the rights of princes, and will be convinc'd, that a strict adherence to any general rules, and the rigid loyalty to particular persons and families, on which some people set so high a value, are virtues that hold less of reason, than of bigotry and superstition. In this particular, the study of history confirms the reasonings of true philosophy; which, shewing us the original qualities of human nature, teaches us to regard the controversies in politics as incapable of any decision in most cases, and as entirely subordinate to the interests of peace and liberty. Where the public good does not evidently demand a change; 'tis certain, that the concurrence of all those titles, *original contract, long possession, present possession, succession, and positive laws*, forms the strongest title to sovereignty, and is justly regarded as sacred and inviolable. But when these titles are mingled and oppos'd in different degrees, they

they often occasion perplexity; and are less SECT.  
capable of solution from the arguments of X.

lawyers and philosophers, than from the <sup>Of the</sup>  
swords of the soldiery. Who shall tell me, <sup>objects of</sup>  
for instance, whether *Germanicus*, or *Drusus*, <sup>allegiance.</sup>

ought to have succeeded *Tiberius*, had he  
died while they were both alive, without  
naming any of them for his successor?

Ought the right of adoption to be receiv'd  
as equivalent to that of blood in a nation,  
where it had the same effect in private fami-  
lies, and had already, in two instances, taken  
place in the public? Ought *Germanicus* to  
be esteem'd the eldest son, because he was  
born before *Drusus*; or the younger, because  
he was adopted after the birth of his brother?  
Ought the right of the elder to be regarded  
in a nation, where the eldest brother had no  
advantage in the succession to private fami-  
lies? Ought the *Roman* empire at that time  
to be esteem'd hereditary, because of two  
examples; or ought it, even so early, to be  
regarded as belonging to the stronger, or the  
present possessor, as being founded on so  
recent an usurpation? Upon whatever prin-  
ciples we may pretend to answer these and  
such like questions, I am afraid we shall  
never be able to satisfy an impartial enquirer,  
who adopts no party in political controver-

PART lies, and will be satisfied with nothing but  
 II. sound reason and philosophy.

*Of justice  
 and inju-  
 stice.*

BUT here an *English* reader will be apt to enquire concerning that famous *revolution*, which has had such a happy influence on our constitution, and has been attended with such mighty consequences. We have already remark'd, that in the case of enormous tyranny and oppression, 'tis lawful to take arms even against supreme power; and that as government is a mere human invention for mutual advantage and security, it no longer imposes any obligation, either natural or moral, when once it ceases to have that tendency. But tho' this *general* principle be authoriz'd by common sense, and the practice of all ages, 'tis certainly impossible for the laws, or even for philosophy, to establish any *particular* rules, by which we may know when resistance is lawful; and decide all controversies, which may arise on that subject. This may not only happen with regard to supreme power; but 'tis possible, even in some constitutions, where the legislative authority is not lodg'd in one person, that there may be a magistrate so eminent and powerful, as to oblige the laws to keep silence in this particular.



ticular. Nor wou'd this silence be an effect SECT.  
only of their *respect*, but also of their *pru-* X.

*dence*; since 'tis certain, that in the vast va- Of the  
riety of circumstances, which occur in all objects of  
governments, ~~an~~ exercise of power, in so allegiance.  
great a magistrate, may at one time be bene-  
ficial to the public, which at another time  
wou'd be pernicious and tyrannical. But

notwithstanding this silence of the laws in  
limited monarchies, 'tis certain, that the  
people still retain the right of resistance;  
since 'tis impossible, even in the most des-  
potic governments, to deprive them of it.  
The same necessity of self-preservation, and  
the same motive of public good, give them  
the same liberty in the one case as in the  
other. And we may farther observe, that  
in such mix'd governments, the cases,  
wherein resistance is lawful, must occur  
much oftener, and greater indulgence be  
given to the subjects to defend themselves  
by force of arms, than in arbitrary govern-  
ments. Not only where the chief magistrate  
enters into measures, in themselves, ex-  
tremely pernicious to the public, but even  
when he wou'd encroach on the other parts  
of the constitution, and extend his power  
beyond the legal bounds, it is allowable to  
resist and dethrone him; tho' such resistance

PART and violence may, in the general tenor of  
 II. the laws, be deem'd unlawful and rebellious.  
 Of justice For besides that nothing is more essential  
 and inju- to public interest, than the preservation of  
 stice. public liberty; 'tis evident, that if such a  
 mix'd government be once suppos'd to be  
 establish'd, every part or member of the  
 constitution must have a right of self-defence,  
 and of maintaining its antient bounds against  
 the encroachment of every other authority.  
 As matter wou'd have been created in vain,  
 were it depriv'd of a power of resistance,  
 without which no part of it cou'd preserve  
 a distinct existence, and the whole might be-  
 crowded up into a single point: So 'tis a  
 gross absurdity to suppose, in any govern-  
 ment, a right without a remedy, or allow,  
 that the supreme power is shar'd with the  
 people, without allowing, that 'tis lawful  
 for them to defend their share against every  
 invader. Those, therefore, who wou'd seem  
 to respect our free government, and yet deny  
 the right of resistance, have renounc'd all  
 pretensions to common sense, and do not  
 merit a serious answer.

It does not belong to my present pur-  
 pose to shew, that these general principles  
 are applicable to the late *revolution*; and that  
 all the rights and privileges, which ought  
 to

to be sacred to a free nation, were at that SECT.  
time threaten'd with the utmost danger. I X.  
am better pleas'd to leave this controverted  
subject, if it really admits of controversy;  
and to indulge myself in some philosophical  
reflections, which naturally arise from that  
important event.

*Of the  
objects of  
allegiance.*

*First,* We may observe, that shou'd the  
*lords* and *commons* in our constitution, with-  
out any reason from public interest, either  
depose the king in being, or after his death  
exclude the prince, who, by laws and settled  
custom, ought to succeed, no one wou'd  
esteem their proceedings legal, or think  
themselves bound to comply with them.  
But shou'd the king, by his unjust practices,  
or his attempts for a tyrannical and despotic  
power, justly forfeit his legal, it then not  
only becomes morally lawful and suitable to  
the nature of political society to dethrone  
him; but what is more, we are apt likewise  
to think, that the remaining members of the  
constitution acquire a right of excluding his  
next heir, and of chusing whom they please  
for his successor. This is founded on a very  
singular quality of our thought and imagi-  
nation. When a king forfeits his authority,  
his heir ought naturally to remain in the  
same situation, as if the king were remov'd  
by



PART by death; unless by mixing himself in the

II. tyranny, he forfeit it for himself. But tho'

*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.*

this may seem reasonable, we easily comply with the contrary opinion. The deposition of a king, in such a government as ours, is certainly an act beyond all common authority, and an illegal assuming a power for public good, which, in the ordinary course of government, can belong to no member of the constitution. When the public good is so great and so evident as to justify the action, the commendable use of this licence causes us naturally to attribute to the *parliament* a right of using farther licences; and the antient bounds of the laws being once transgressed with approbation, we are not apt to be so strict in confining ourselves precisely within their limits. The mind naturally runs on with any train of action, which it has begun; nor do we commonly make any scruple concerning our duty, after the first action of any kind, which we perform. Thus at the *revolution*, ~~no one~~ who thought the deposition of the father justifiable, esteem'd themselves to be confin'd to his infant son; tho' had that unhappy monarch died innocent at that time, and had his son, by any accident, been convey'd beyond seas, there is no doubt but a regency wou'd have been

*A none*

been appointed till he shou'd come to age, SECT.  
and cou'd be restor'd to his dominions. As X.  
the slightest properties of the imagination *Of the*  
have an effect on the judgments of the *objects of*  
people, it shews the wisdom of the laws *allegiance.*  
and of the parliament to take advantage of  
such properties, and to chuse the magistrates  
either in or out of a line, according as the  
vulgar will most naturally attribute authority  
and right to them.

*Secondly*, Tho' the accession of the *Prince*  
of *Orange* to the throne might at first give  
occasion to many disputes, and his title be  
contested, it ought not now to appear doubt-  
ful, but must have acquir'd a sufficient au-  
thority from those three princes, who have  
succeeded him upon the same title. No-  
thing is more usual, tho' nothing may, at  
first sight, appear more unreasonable, than  
this way of thinking. Princes often *seem* to  
acquire a right from their successors, as well  
as from their ancestors; and a king, who  
during his life-time might justly be deem'd  
an usurper, will be regarded by posterity  
as a lawful prince, because he has had the  
good fortune to settle his family on the  
throne, and entirely change the antient form  
of government. *Julius Caesar* is regarded  
as the first *Roman* emperor; while *Sylla* and  
*Marius*,

PART *Marius*, whose titles were really the same  
II. as his, are treated as tyrants and usurpers.

*Of justice  
and in-  
justice.*

Time and custom give authority to all forms of government, and all successions of princes; and that power, which at first was founded only on injustice and violence, becomes in time legal and obligatory. Nor does the mind rest there; but returning back upon its footsteps, transfers to their predecessors and ancestors that right, which it naturally ascribes to the posterity, as being related together, and united in the imagination. The present *king of France* makes *Hugh Capet* a more lawful prince than *Cromwell*; as the establish'd liberty of the *Dutch* is no inconsiderable apology for their obstinate resistance to *Philip* the second.

## S E C T. XI.

### *Of the laws of nations.*

SECT.  
XI.

W H E N civil government has been establish'd over the greatest part of mankind, and different societies have been form'd contiguous to each other, there arises a new set of duties among the neighbouring states, suitable to the nature of that commerce, which they carry on with each other.



other. Political writers tell us, that in every kind of intercourse, a body politic is to be consider'd as one person; and indeed this assertion is so far just, that different nations, as well as private persons, require mutual assistance; at the same time that their selfishness and ambition are perpetual sources of war and discord. But tho' nations in this particular resemble individuals, yet as they are very different in other respects, no wonder they regulate themselves by different maxims, and give rise to a new set of rules, which we call *the laws of nations*. Under this head we may comprize the sacredness of the persons of ambassadors, the declaration of war, the abstaining from poison'd arms, with other duties of that kind, which are evidently calculated for the commerce, that is peculiar to different societies.

BUT tho' these rules be super-added to the laws of nature, the former do not entirely abolish the latter; and one may safely affirm, that the three fundamental rules of justice, the stability of possession, its transference by consent, and the performance of promises, are duties of princes, as well as of subjects. The same interest produces the same effect in both cases. Where possession has no stability, there must be perpetual war.

SECT.  
XI.*Of the  
laws of  
nations.*

PART war. Where property is not transferr'd by

II. consent, there can be no commerce. Where  
*Of justice  
and inju-  
stice.* promises are not observ'd, there can be no

leagues nor alliances. The advantages, therefore, of peace, commerce, and mutual succour, make us extend to different kingdoms the same notions of justice, which take place among individuals.

THERE is a maxim very current in the world, which few politicians are willing to avow, but which has been authoriz'd by the practice of all ages, *that there is a system of morals calculated for princes, much more free than that which ought to govern private persons.* 'Tis evident this is not to be understood of the lesser *extent* of public duties and obligations; nor will any one be so extravagant as to assert, that the most solemn treaties ought to have no force among princes. For as princes do actually form treaties among themselves, they must propose some advantage from the execution of them; and the prospect of such advantage for the future must engage them to perform their part, and must establish that law of nature. The meaning, therefore, of this political maxim is, that tho' the morality of princes has the same *extent*, yet it has not the same *force* as that of private persons,  
and

and may lawfully be transgress'd from a more trivial motive. However shocking such a proposition may appear to certain philosophers, 'twill be easy to defend it upon those principles, by which we have accounted for the origin of justice and equity.

SECT.  
IX.  
*Of the  
laws of  
nations.*

WHEN men have found by experience, that 'tis impossible to subsist without society, and that 'tis impossible to maintain society, while they give free course to their appetites; so urgent an interest quickly restrains their actions, and imposes an obligation to observe those rules, which we call *the laws of justice*. This obligation of interest rests not here; but by the necessary course of the passions and sentiments, gives rise to the moral obligation of duty; while we approve of such actions as tend to the peace of society, and disapprove of such as tend to its disturbance. The same *natural* obligation of interest takes place among independent kingdoms, and gives rise to the same *morality*; so that no one of ever so corrupt morals will approve of a prince, who voluntarily, and of his own accord, breaks his word, or violates any treaty. But here we may observe, that tho' the intercourse of different states be advantageous, and even sometimes necessary, yet it is not so necessary nor advantageous as that



PART that among individuals, without which 'tis

II. utterly impossible for human nature ever to  
 Of justice  
 and inju-  
 stice. sub-  
 sist. Since, therefore, the *natural* obli-  
 gation to justice, among different states, is  
 not so strong as among individuals, the *mo-*  
*ral* obligation, which arises from it, must  
 partake of its weakness; and we must neces-  
 sarily give a greater indulgence to a prince  
 or minister, who deceives another; than to  
 a private gentleman, who breaks his word of  
 honour.

SHOU'D it be ask'd, *what proportion these*  
*two species of morality bear to each other?*  
 I wou'd answer, that this is a question, to  
 which we can never give any precise answer;  
 nor is it possible to reduce to numbers the  
 proportion, which we ought to fix betwixt  
 them. One may safely affirm, that this  
 proportion finds itself, without any art or  
 study of men; as we may observe on many  
 other occasions. The practice of the world  
 goes farther in teaching us the degrees of our  
 duty, than the most subtile philosophy, which  
 was ever yet invented. And this may serve  
 as a convincing proof, that all men have an  
 implicit notion of the foundation of those  
 moral rules concerning natural and civil ju-  
 stice, and are sensible, that they arise merely  
 from human conventions, and from the in-  
 terest

terest, which we have in the preservation of peace and order. For otherwise the diminution of the interest wou'd never produce a relaxation of the morality, and reconcile us more easily to any transgression of justice among princes and republics, than in the private commerce of one subject with another.

SECT.  
XI.  
*Of the  
laws of  
nations.*

## S E C T. XII.

*Of chastity and modesty.*

**I**F any difficulty attend this system concerning the laws of nature and nations, 'twill be with regard to the universal approbation or blame, which follows their observance or transgression, and which some may not think sufficiently explain'd from the general interests of society. To remove, as far as possible, all scruples of this kind, I shall here consider another set of duties, *viz.* the *modesty* and *chastity* which belong to the fair sex: And I doubt not but these virtues will be found to be still more conspicuous instances of the operation of those principles, which I have insisted on.

SECT.  
XII.

PART THERE are some philosophers, who at-

II. tack the female virtues with great vehemence, and fancy they have gone very far in detecting popular errors, when they can show, that there is no foundation in nature for all that exterior modesty, which we require in the expressions, and dress, and behaviour of the fair sex. I believe I may spare myself the trouble of insisting on so obvious a subject, and may proceed, without farther preparation, to examine after what manner such notions arise from education, from the voluntary conventions of men, and from the interest of society.

*Of justice  
and injustice.*

WHOEVER considers the length and feebleness of human infancy, with the concern which both sexes naturally have for their offspring, will easily perceive, that there must be an union of male and female for the education of the young, and that this union must be of considerable duration. But in order to induce the men to impose on themselves this restraint, and undergo chearfully all the fatigues and expences, to which it subjects them, they must believe, that the children are their own, and that their natural instinct is not directed to a wrong object, when they give a loose to love and tenderness. Now if we examine



the structure of the human body, we shall find, that this security is very difficult to be attain'd on our part; and that since, in the copulation of the sexes, the principle of generation goes from the man to the woman, an error may easily take place on the side of the former, tho' it be utterly impossible with regard to the latter. From this trivial and anatomical observation is deriv'd that vast difference betwixt the education and duties of the two sexes.

SECT.  
XII.  
*Of chastity  
and modesty.*

WERE a philosopher to examine the matter *a priori*, he wou'd reason after the following manner. Men are induc'd to labour for the maintenance and education of their children, by the persuasion that they are really their own; and therefore 'tis reasonable, and even necessary, to give them some security in this particular. This security cannot consist entirely in the imposing of severe punishments on any transgressions of conjugal fidelity on the part of the wife; since these public punishments cannot be inflicted without legal proof, which 'tis difficult to meet with in this subject. What restraint, therefore, shall we impose on women, in order to counter-balance so strong a temptation as they have to fidelity? There seems to be no restraint possible, but in the

PART punishment of bad fame or reputation; a

II. *Of justice and injustice.* punishment, which has a mighty influence on the human mind, and at the same time is inflicted by the world upon surmises, and conjectures, and proofs, that wou'd never be receiv'd in any court of judicature. In order, therefore, to impose a due restraint on the female sex, we must attach a peculiar degree of shame to their infidelity, above what arises merely from its injustice, and must bestow proportionable praises on their chastity.

BUT tho' this be a very strong motive to fidelity, our philosopher wou'd quickly discover, that it wou'd not alone be sufficient to that purpose. All human creatures, especially of the female sex, are apt to over-look remote motives in favour of any present temptation: The temptation is here the strongest imaginable: Its approaches are insensible and seducing: And a woman easily finds, or flatters herself she shall find, certain means of securing her reputation, and preventing all the pernicious consequences of her pleasures. 'Tis necessary, therefore, that, beside the infamy attending such licences, there shou'd be some preceding backwardness or dread, which may prevent their first approaches, and may give the female sex a repugnance

repugnance to all expressions, and postures, and liberties, that have an immediate relation to that enjoyment. SECT. XII.

*Of chastity  
and modesty.*

SUCH wou'd be the reasonings of our speculative philosopher: But I am persuaded, that if he had not a perfect knowledge of human nature, he wou'd be apt to regard them as mere chimerical speculations, and wou'd consider the infamy attending infidelity, and backwardness to all its approaches, as principles that were rather to be wish'd than hop'd for in the world. For what means, wou'd he say, of persuading mankind, that the transgressions of conjugal duty are more infamous than any other kind of injustice, when 'tis evident they are more excusable, upon account of the greatness of the temptation? And what possibility of giving a backwardness to the approaches of a pleasure, to which nature has inspir'd so strong a propensity; and a propensity that 'tis absolutely necessary in the end to comply with, for the support of the species?

BUT speculative reasonings, which cost so much pains to philosophers, are often form'd by the world naturally, and without reflection: As difficulties, which seem unsurmountable in theory, are easily got over in practice. Those, who have an interest



PART in the fidelity of women, naturally dis-  
 II. approve of their infidelity, and all the ap-  
 proaches to it. Those, who have no in-  
 Of justice and inju-  
 stice.  
 A and are also  
 apt to be affected  
 with Sympathy  
 for the general  
 Interests of  
 Society.  
 terest, are carried along with the stream,  
 Education takes possession of the ductile  
 minds of the fair sex in their infancy. And  
 when a general rule of this kind is once  
 establish'd, men are apt to extend it beyond  
 those principles, from which it first arose.  
 Thus batchelors, however debauch'd, cannot  
 chuse but be shock'd with any instance of  
 lewdness or impudence in women. And  
 tho' all these maxims have a plain reference  
 to generation, yet women past child-bearing  
 have no more privilege in this respect, than  
 those who are in the flower of their youth  
 and beauty. Men have undoubtedly an im-  
 plicit notion, that all those ideas of modesty  
 and decency have a regard to generation;  
 since they impose not the same laws, *with*  
*the same force*, on the male sex, where that  
 reason takes not place. The exception is  
 there obvious and extensive, and founded on  
 a remarkable difference, which produces a  
 clear separation and disjunction of ideas.  
 But as the case is not the same with regard  
 to the different ages of women, for this  
 reason, tho' men know, that these notions  
 are founded on the public interest, yet the  
 general

general rule carries us beyond the original principle, and makes us extend the notions of modesty over the whole sex, from their earliest infancy to their extremest old-age and infirmity. S E C T.  
XII.  
*Of chastity  
and mo-  
desty.*

COURAGE, which is the point of honour among men, derives its merit, in a great measure, from artifice, as well as the chastity of women; tho' it has also some foundation in nature, as we shall see afterwards.

As to the obligations which the male sex lie under, with regard to chastity, we may observe, that according to the general notions of the world, they bear nearly the same proportion to the obligations of women, as the obligations of the law of nations do to those of the law of nature. 'Tis contrary to the interest of civil society, that men shou'd have an *entire* liberty of indulging their appetites in venereal enjoyment: But as this interest is weaker than in the case of the female sex, the moral obligation, arising from it, must be proportionably weaker. And to prove this we need only appeal to the practice and sentiments of all nations and ages.







## PART III.

### *Of the other virtues and vices.*

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#### S E C T. I.

#### *Of the origin of the natural virtues and vices.*

**W**E come now to the examination of S E C T. I.  
such virtues and vices as are entirely  
natural, and have no dependance on the ar-  
tifice and contrivance of men. The exami-  
nation of these will conclude this system of  
morals.

**T**HE chief spring or actuating principle  
of the human mind is pleasure or pain ; and  
when these sensations are remov'd, both from  
our thought and feeling, we are, in a great  
measure, incapable of passion or action, of  
desire or volition. The most immediate  
effects of pleasure and pain are the propense  
and

PART and averſe motions of the mind ; which are  
 III. diverſified into volition, into deſire and averſion, grief and joy, hope and fear, according as the pleaſure or pain changes its ſituation, and becomes probable or improbable, certain or uncertain, or is conſider'd as out of our power for the preſent moment. But when along with this, the objects, that cauſe pleaſure or pain, acquire a relation to ourſelves or others ; they ſtill continue to excite deſire and averſion, grief and joy : But cauſe, at the ſame time, the indirect paſſions of pride or humility, love or hatred, which in this caſe have a double relation of impreſſions and ideas to the pain or pleaſure.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

WE have already obſerv'd, that moral diſtinctions depend entirely on certain peculiar ſentiments of pain and pleaſure, and that whatever mental quality in ourſelves or others gives us a ſatisfaction, by the ſurvey or reflection, is of courſe virtuous ; as every thing of this nature, that gives uneaſineſs, is vicious. Now ſince every quality in ourſelves or others, which gives pleaſure, always cauſes pride or love ; as every one, that produces uneaſineſs, excites humility or hatred : It follows, that theſe two particulars are to be conſider'd as equivalent, with regard to our mental qualities, *virtue* and the power  
 of

of producing love or pride, *vice* and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge of the one by the other; and may pronounce any *quality* of the mind virtuous, which causes love or pride; and any one vicious, which causes hatred or humility.

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Of the  
origin of  
the natu-  
ral vir-  
tues and  
vices.

If any *action* be either virtuous or vicious, 'tis only as a sign of some quality or character. It must depend upon durable principles of the mind, which extend over the whole conduct, and enter into the personal character. Actions themselves, not proceeding from any constant principle, have no influence on love or hatred, pride or humility; and consequently are never consider'd in morality.

THIS reflection is self-evident, and deserves to be attended to, as being of the utmost importance in the present subject. We are never to consider any single action in our enquiries concerning the origin of morals; but only the quality or character from which the action proceeded. These alone are *durable* enough to affect our sentiments concerning the person. Actions are, indeed, better indications of a character than words, or even wishes and sentiments; but 'tis only so far as they are such indications, that they are



PART are attended with love or hatred, praise or  
 III. blame.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

To discover the true origin of morals, and of that love or hatred, which arises from mental qualities, we must take the matter pretty deep, and compare some principles, which have been already examin'd and explain'd.

WE may begin with considering a-new the nature and force of *sympathy*. The minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations; nor can any one be actuated by any affection, of which all others are not, in some degree, susceptible. As in strings equally wound up, the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all the affections readily pass from one person to another, and beget correspondent movements in every human creature. When I see the *effects* of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes, and forms such a lively idea of the passion, as is presently converted into the passion itself. In like manner, when I perceive the *causes* of any emotion, my mind is convey'd to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion. Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery,

'tis

'tis certain, that even before it begun, the preparation of the instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patient and assistants, wou'd have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror. No passion of another discovers itself immediately to the mind. We are only sensible of its causes or effects. From *these* we infer the passion: And consequently *these* give rise to our sympathy.

SECT.  
I.  
*Of the  
origin of  
the natu-  
ral vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

OUR sense of beauty depends very much on this principle; and where any object has a tendency to produce pleasure in its possessor, it is always regarded as beautiful; as every object, that has a tendency to produce pain, is disagreeable and deform'd. Thus the conveniency of a house, the fertility of a field, the strength of a horse, the capacity, security, and swift-sailing of a vessel, form the principal beauty of these several objects. Here the object, which is denominated beautiful, pleases only by its tendency to produce a certain effect. That effect is the pleasure or advantage of some other person. Now the pleasure of a stranger, for whom we have no friendship, pleases us only by sympathy. To this principle, therefore, is owing

PART owing the beauty, which we find in every

I. thing that is useful. How considerable a  
 Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices. part this is of beauty will easily appear upon  
 reflection. Wherever an object has a ten-  
 dency to produce pleasure in the possessor,  
 or in other words, is the proper *cause* of  
 pleasure, it is sure to please the spectator,  
 by a delicate sympathy with the possessor.  
 Most of the works of art are esteem'd beau-  
 tiful, in proportion to their fitness for the  
 use of man, and even many of the pro-  
 ductions of nature derive their beauty from  
 that source. Handsome and beautiful, on  
 most occasions, is not an absolute but a re-  
 lative quality, and pleases us by nothing but  
 its tendency to produce an end that is  
 agreeable<sup>a</sup>.

THE same principle produces, in many in-  
 stances, our sentiments of morals, as well as  
 those of beauty. No virtue is more esteem'd  
 than justice, and no vice more detested than  
 injustice; nor are there any qualities, which  
 go farther to the fixing the character, either  
 as amiable or odious. Now justice is a mo-  
 ral virtue, merely because it has that tendency  
 to

<sup>a</sup> Decentior equus cujus astricta sunt ilia; sed idem velocior.  
 Pulcher aspectu fit athleta, cujus lacertos exercitatio expressit;  
 idem certamini paratior. Nunquam vero *species* ab utilitate  
 dividitur. Sed hoc quidem discernere, modici judicii est.

Quint. lib. 8.



to the good of mankind; and, indeed, is no- S E C T.  
thing but an artificial invention to that pur- I.

pose. The same may be said of allegiance, *Of the origin of the natural virtues and vices.* And since there is a very strong sentiment of morals, which <sup>has always</sup> ~~in all nations, and all ages,~~ *The Inven-* ~~has~~ *tion of them had* attended them, we must allow, that the reflecting on the tendency of characters and mental qualities, is sufficient to give us the sentiments of approbation and blame. Now as the means to an end can only be agreeable, where the end is agreeable; and as the good of society, where our own interest is not concern'd, or that of our friends, pleases only by sympathy: It follows, that sympathy is the source of the esteem, which we pay to all the artificial virtues. *chiefly in view their own interest. But we carry our approbation of them into the most distant Countries and ages, and much beyond our own Interest.*

THUS it appears, *that* sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature, *that* it has a great influence on our taste of beauty, and *that* it produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues. From thence we may presume, that it also gives rise to many of the other virtues; and that qualities acquire our approbation, because of their tendency to the good of mankind. This presumption must become a certainty, when we find

PART find that most of those qualities, which we  
 III. *naturally* approve of, have actually that tendency, and render a man a proper member of society: While the qualities, which we  
 Of the other virtues and vices. *naturally* disapprove of, have a contrary tendency, and render any intercourse with the

person dangerous or disagreeable. For having found, that such tendencies have force enough to produce the strongest sentiment of morals, we can never reasonably, in these cases, look for any other cause of approbation or blame; it being an inviolable maxim in philosophy, that where any particular cause is sufficient for an effect, we ought to rest satisfied with it, and ought not to multiply causes without necessity. We have happily attain'd experiments in the artificial virtues, where the tendency of qualities to the good of society, is the *sole* cause of our approbation, without any suspicion of the concurrence of another principle. From thence we learn the force of that principle. And where that principle may take place, and the quality approv'd of is really beneficial to society, a true philosopher will never require any other principle to account for the strongest approbation and esteem.

THAT many of the natural virtues have this tendency to the good of society, no one  
 can

can doubt of. Meekness, beneficence, charity, generosity, clemency, moderation, equity, bear the greatest figure among the moral qualities, and are commonly denominated the *social* virtues, to mark their tendency to the good of society. This goes so far, that some philosophers have represented all moral distinctions as the effect of artifice and education, when skilful politicians endeavour'd to restrain the turbulent passions of men, and make them operate to the public good, by the notions of honour and shame. This system, however, is not consistent with experience. For, *first*, there are other virtues and vices beside those which have this tendency to the public advantage and loss. *Secondly*, had not men a natural sentiment of approbation and blame, it cou'd never be excited by politicians; nor wou'd the words *laudable* and *praise-worthy*, *blameable* and *odious*, be any more intelligible, than if they were a language perfectly unknown to us, as we have already observ'd. But tho' this system be erroneous, it may teach us, that moral distinctions arise, in a great measure, from the tendency of qualities and characters to the interest of society, and that 'tis our concern for that interest, which makes us approve or disapprove of them. Now we

SECT.  
I.  
*Of the  
origin of  
the natu-  
ral vir-  
tues and  
vices.*



PART have no such extensive concern for society but

III. from sympathy; and consequently 'tis that

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

*which are  
useful or  
pernicious  
to Society.*

principle, which takes us so far out of our-  
selves, as to give us the same pleasure or  
uneasiness in ~~the~~ characters ~~of others~~, as if  
they had a tendency to our own advantage  
or loss.

THE only difference betwixt the natural  
virtues and justice lies in this, that the good,  
which results from the former, arises from  
every single act, and is the object of some  
natural passion: Whereas a single act of  
justice, consider'd in itself, may often be  
contrary to the public good; and 'tis only  
the concurrence of mankind, in a general  
scheme or system of action, which is advan-  
tageous. When I relieve persons in distress,  
my natural humanity is my motive; and so  
far as my succour extends, so far have I  
promoted the happiness of my fellow-crea-  
tures. But if we examine all the questions,  
that come before any tribunal of justice, we  
shall find, that, considering each case apart,  
it wou'd as often be an instance of humanity  
to decide contrary to the laws of justice as  
conformable them. Judges take from a poor  
man to give to a rich; they bestow on the  
dissolute the labour of the industrious; and  
put into the hands of the vicious the means

of harming both themselves and others. SECT.

The whole scheme, however, of law and I.

justice is advantageous to the society; and

'twas with a view to this advantage, that

men, by their voluntary conventions, estab-

lish'd it. After it is once establish'd by

these conventions, it is *naturally* attended

with a strong sentiment of morals; which

can proceed from nothing but our sympathy

with the interests of society. We need no

other explication of that esteem, which at-

tends such of the natural virtues, as have a

tendency to the public good.

I MUST farther add, that there are several

circumstances, which render this hypothesis

much more probable with regard to the

natural than the artificial virtues. 'Tis cer-

tain, that the imagination is more affected

by what is particular, than by what is gene-

ral; and that the sentiments are always

mov'd with difficulty, where their objects

are, in any degree, loose and undetermin'd:

Now every particular act of justice is not

beneficial to society, but the whole scheme

or system: And it may not, perhaps, be

any individual person, for whom we are

concern'd, who receives benefit from justice,

but the whole society alike. On the con-

trary, every particular act of generosity, or

*Of the  
origin of  
the natu-  
ral vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

*and to  
every  
individual*

PART relief of the industrious and indigent, is  
 III. beneficial; and is beneficial to a particular  
 person, who is not undeserving of it. 'Tis  
 more natural, therefore, to think, that the  
 tendencies of the latter virtue will affect our  
 sentiments, and command our approbation,  
 than those of the former; and therefore,  
 since we find, that the approbation of the  
 former arises from their tendencies, we may  
 ascribe, with better reason, the same cause  
 to the approbation of the latter. In any  
 number of similar effects, if a cause can be  
 discover'd for one, we ought to extend that  
 cause to all the other effects, which can be  
 accounted for by it: But much more, if  
 these other effects be attended with peculiar  
 circumstances, which facilitate the operation  
 of that cause.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

BEFORE I proceed farther, I must ob-  
 serve two remarkable circumstances in this  
 affair, which may seem objections to the  
 present system. The first may be thus ex-  
 plain'd. When any quality, or character,  
 has a tendency to the good of mankind, we  
 are pleas'd with it, and approve of it; be-  
 cause it presents the lively idea of pleasure;  
 which idea affects us by sympathy, and is  
 itself a kind of pleasure. But as this sym-  
 pathy is very variable, it may be thought,  
 that



that our sentiments of morals must admit of SECT.  
all the same variations. We sympathize more I.

with persons contiguous to us, than with Of the  
persons remote from us: With our acquaint- origin of  
ance, than with strangers: With our coun- the natu-  
trymen, than with foreigners. But notwith- ral vir-  
standing this variation of our sympathy, we tues and  
give the same approbation to the same moral vices.  
qualities in *China* as in *England*. They  
appear equally virtuous, and recommend  
themselves equally to the esteem of a judi-  
cious spectator. The sympathy varies with-  
out a variation in our esteem. Our esteem,  
therefore, proceeds not from sympathy.

To this I answer: The approbation of  
moral qualities most certainly is not deriv'd  
from reason, or any comparison of ideas;  
but proceeds entirely from a moral taste, and  
from certain sentiments of pleasure or dis-  
gust, which arise upon the contemplation  
and view of particular qualities or characters.  
Now 'tis evident, that those sentiments,  
whence-ever they are deriv'd, must vary  
according to the distance or contiguity of  
the objects; nor can I feel the same lively  
pleasure from the virtues of a person, who  
liv'd in *Greece* two thousand years ago, that  
I feel from the virtues of a familiar friend  
and acquaintance. Yet I do not say, that I

PART esteem the one more than the other: And

III.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

*a case*

without a variation of the esteem, be an objection, it must have equal force against every other system, as against that of sympathy. But to consider the ~~matter~~ a-right, it has no force at all; and 'tis the easiest matter in the world to account for it. Our situation, with regard both to persons and things, is in continual fluctuation; and a man, that lies at a distance from us, may, in a little time, become a familiar acquaintance. Besides, every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and 'tis impossible we cou'd ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view. In order, therefore, to prevent those continual *contradictions*, and arrive at a more *stable* judgment of things, we fix on some *steady* and *general* points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation. In like manner, external beauty is determin'd merely by pleasure; and 'tis evident, a beautiful countenance cannot give so much pleasure, when seen at the distance of twenty paces, as when it is brought nearer us. We  
say

say not, however, that it appears to us less beautiful: Because we know what effect it will have in such a position, and by that reflection we correct its momentary appearance.

SECT. I.  
*Of the origin of the natural virtues and vices.*

IN general, all sentiments of blame or praise are variable, according to our situation of nearness or remoteness, with regard to the person blam'd or prais'd, and according to the present disposition of our mind. But these variations we regard not in our general decisions, but still apply the terms expressive of our liking or dislike, in the same manner, as if we remain'd in one point of view. Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments, or at least, of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and inalterable. Our servant, if diligent and faithful, may excite stronger sentiments of love and kindness than *Marcus Brutus*, as represented in history; but we say not upon that account, that the former character is more laudable than the latter. We know, that were we to approach equally near to that renown'd patriot, he wou'd command a much higher degree of affection and admiration. Such corrections are common with regard to all the senses; and indeed 'twere impossible



PART We cou'd ever make use of language, or  
 III. communicate our sentiments to one another,  
 did we not correct the momentary appear-  
 Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.  
 tances of things, and overlook our present  
 situation.

'TIS therefore from the influence of characters and qualities, upon those who have an intercourse with any person, that we blame or praise him. We consider not whether the persons, affected by the qualities, be our acquaintance or strangers, countrymen or foreigners. Nay, we over-look our own interest in those general judgments; and blame not a man for opposing us in any of our pretensions, when his own interest is particularly concern'd. We make allowance for a certain degree of selfishness in men; because we know it to be inseparable from human nature, and inherent in our frame and constitution. By this reflection we correct those sentiments of blame, which so naturally arise upon any opposition.

BUT however the general principle of our blame or praise may be corrected by those other principles, 'tis certain, they are not altogether efficacious, nor do our passions often correspond entirely to the present theory. 'Tis seldom men heartily love what lies at a distance from them, and what no  
 way

way redounds to their particular benefit; as S E C T.  
'tis no less rare to meet with persons, who I.  
can pardon another any opposition he makes Of the  
to their interest, however justifiable that op- origin of  
position may be by the general rules of mo- the natu-  
rality. Here we are contented with saying, ral vir-  
that reason requires such an impartial con- tues and  
duct, but that 'tis seldom we can bring our- vices.  
selves to it, and that our passions do not  
readily follow the determination of our judg-  
ment. This language will be easily under-  
stood, if we consider what we formerly said  
concerning that *reason*, which is able to op-  
pose our passion; and which we have found  
to be nothing but a general calm determina-  
tion of the passions, founded on some distant  
view or reflection. When we form our  
judgments of persons, merely from the ten-  
dency of their characters to our own bene-  
fit, or to that of our friends, we find so  
many contradictions to our sentiments in  
society and conversation, and such an uncer-  
tainty from the incessant changes of our situ-  
ation, that we seek some other standard of  
merit and demerit, which may not admit of  
so great variation. Being thus loosen'd from  
our first station, we cannot afterwards fix  
ourselves so commodiously by any means as  
by a sympathy with those, who have any  
commerce

PART commerce with the person we consider. This

III. is far from being as lively as when our own  
*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.* interest is concern'd, or that of our parti-  
 cular friends; nor has it such an influence  
 on our love and hatred: But being equally  
 conformable to our calm and general princi-  
 ples, 'tis said to have an equal authority over  
 our reason, and to command our judgment  
 and opinion. We blame equally a bad  
 action, which we read of in history, with  
 one perform'd in our neighbourhood t'other  
 day: The meaning of which is, that we  
 know from reflection, that the former action  
 wou'd excite as strong sentiments of disap-  
 probation as the latter, were it plac'd in the  
 same position.

I now proceed to the *second* remarkable  
 circumstance, which I propos'd to take no-  
 tice of. Where a person is possess'd of a  
 character, that in its natural tendency is  
 beneficial to society, we esteem him virtuous,  
 and are delighted with the view of his cha-  
 racter, even tho' particular accidents prevent  
 its operation, and incapacitate him from be-  
 ing serviceable to his friends and country.  
 Virtue in rags is still virtue; and the love,  
 which it procures, attends a man into a  
 dungeon or desert, where the virtue can no  
 longer be exerted in action, and is lost to  
 all



all the world. Now this may be esteem'd SECT.  
an objection to the present system. Sympa- I.  
thy interests us in the good of mankind; *Of the*  
and if sympathy were the source of our *origin of*  
esteem for virtue, that sentiment of appro- *the natu-*  
bation cou'd only take place, where the *ral vir-*  
virtue actually attain'd its end, and was bene- *tues and*  
ficial to mankind. Where it fails of its *vices.*  
end, 'tis only an imperfect means; and there-  
fore can never acquire any merit from that  
end. The goodness of an end can bestow  
a merit on such means alone as are com-  
pleat, and actually produce the end.

To this we may reply, that where any  
object, in all its parts, is fitted to attain any  
agreeable end, it naturally gives us pleasure,  
and is esteem'd beautiful, even tho' some ex-  
ternal circumstances be wanting to render it  
altogether effectual. 'Tis sufficient if every  
thing be compleat in the object itself. A  
house, that is contriv'd with great judgment  
for all the commodities of life, pleases us  
upon that account; tho' perhaps we are sen-  
sible, that no-one will ever dwell in it. A  
fertile soil, and a happy climate, delight us  
by a reflection on the happiness which they  
wou'd afford the inhabitants, tho' at present  
the country be desert and uninhabited. A  
man, whose limbs and shape promise strength  
and

PART and activity, is esteem'd handsome, tho'

III. condemn'd to perpetual imprisonment. The  
 Of the imagination has a set of passions belonging  
 other vir- to it, upon which our sentiments of beauty  
 tues and much depend. These passions are mov'd by  
 vices. degrees of liveliness and strength, which are  
 inferior to *belief*, and independent of the real  
 existence of their objects. Where a character  
 is, in every respect, fitted to be beneficial to  
 society, the imagination passes easily from  
 the cause to the effect, without considering  
 that there are still some circumstances want-  
 ing to render the cause a compleat one.  
*General rules* create a species of probability,  
 which sometimes influences the judgment,  
 and always the imagination.

'Tis true, when the cause is compleat,  
 and a good disposition is attended with good  
 fortune, which renders it really beneficial to  
 society, it gives a stronger pleasure to the  
 spectator, and is attended with a more lively  
 sympathy. We are more affected by it;  
 and yet we do not say that it is more vir-  
 tuous, or that we esteem it more. We  
 know, that an alteration of fortune may  
 render the benevolent disposition entirely im-  
 potent; and therefore we separate, as much  
 as possible, the fortune from the disposition.  
 The case is the same, as when we correct  
 the

the different sentiments of virtue, which proceed from its different distances from ourselves. The passions do not always follow our corrections; but these corrections serve sufficiently to regulate our abstract notions, and are alone regarded, when we pronounce in general concerning the degrees of vice and virtue.

SECT.  
I.

*Of the origin of the natural virtues and vices.*

'Tis observ'd by critics, that all words or sentences, which are difficult to the pronunciation, are disagreeable to the ear. There is no difference, whether a man hear them pronounc'd, or read them silently to himself. When I run over a book with my eye, I imagine I hear it all; and also, by the force of imagination, enter into the uneasiness, which the delivery of it wou'd give the speaker. The uneasiness is not real; but as such a composition of words has a natural tendency to produce it, this is sufficient to affect the mind with a painful sentiment, and render the ~~discourse~~ harsh and disagreeable. 'Tis a similar case, where any real quality is, by accidental circumstances, render'd impotent, and is depriv'd of its natural influence on society.

*style*

UPON these principles we may easily remove any contradiction, which may appear to be betwixt the *extensive sympathy*, on which



PART which our sentiments of virtue depend, and  
 III. that *limited generosity* which I have frequently observ'd to be natural to men, and which justice and property suppose, according to the precedent reasoning. My sympathy with another may give me the sentiment of pain and disapprobation, when any object is presented, that has a tendency to give him uneasiness; tho' I may not be willing to sacrifice any thing of my own interest, or cross any of my passions, for his satisfaction. A house may displease me by being ill-contriv'd for the convenience of the owner; and yet I may refuse to give a shilling towards the rebuilding of it. Sentiments must touch the heart, to make them controul our passions: But they need not extend beyond the imagination, to make them influence our taste. When a building seems clumsy and tottering to the eye, it is ugly and disagreeable; tho' we be fully assur'd of the solidity of the workmanship. 'Tis a kind of fear, which causes this sentiment of disapprobation; but the passion is not the same with that which we feel, when oblig'd to stand under a wall, that we really think tottering and insecure. The *seeming tendencies* of objects affect the mind: And the emotions they excite are of a like species

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

species with those, which proceed from the *SECT. I.*  
*real consequences* of objects, but their feeling  
 is different. Nay, these emotions are so dif-  
 ferent in their feeling, that they may often  
 be contrary, without destroying each other;  
 as when the fortifications of a city belonging  
 to an enemy are esteem'd beautiful upon ac-  
 count of their strength, tho' we cou'd wish  
 that they were entirely destroy'd. The  
 imagination adheres to the *general* views of  
 things, and distinguishes the feelings they  
 produce, ~~from those~~ which arise from our  
 particular and momentary situation.

*Of the  
 origin of  
 the natu-  
 ral vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

*belov'd  
 and*

If we examine the panegyrics that are  
 commonly made of great men, we shall  
 find, that most of the qualities, which are  
 attributed to them, may be divided into two  
 kinds, viz. such as make them perform their  
 part in society; and such as render them  
 serviceable to themselves, and enable them  
 to promote their own interest. Their *pru-  
 dence, temperance, frugality, industry, assi-  
 duity, enterprize, dexterity*, are celebrated,  
 as well as their *generosity and humanity*. If  
 we ever give an indulgence to any quality,  
 that disables a man from making a figure in  
 life, 'tis to that of *indolence*, which is not  
 suppos'd to deprive one of his parts and ca-  
 pacity,

PART capacity, but only suspends their exercise; and

I. that without any inconvenience to the person himself, since 'tis, in some measure, from his own choice. Yet indolence is always allow'd to be a fault, and a very great one, if extreme: Nor do a man's friends ever acknowledge him to be subject to it, but in order to save his character in more material articles. He cou'd make a figure, say they, if he pleas'd to give application: His understanding is sound, his conception quick, and his memory tenacious; but he hates business, and is indifferent about his fortune. And this a man sometimes may make even a subject of vanity; tho' with the air of confessing a fault: Because he may think, that this incapacity for business implies much more noble qualities; such as a philosophical spirit, a fine taste, a delicate wit, or a relish for pleasure and society. But take any other case: Suppose a quality, that without being an indication of any other good qualities, incapacitates a man *always* for business, and is destructive to his interest; such as a blundering understanding, and a wrong judgment of every thing in life; inconstancy and irresolution, or a want of address in the management of men and business: These are all allow'd to be imperfections

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*



tions in a character; and many men wou'd rather acknowledge the greatest crimes, than have it suspected, that they are, in any degree, subject to them.

'Tis very happy, in our philosophical researches, when we find the same phænomenon diversified by a variety of circumstances; and by discovering what is common among them, can the better assure ourselves of the truth of any hypothesis we may make use of to explain ~~it~~. Were nothing esteem'd virtue but what were beneficial to society, I am perswaded, that the foregoing explication of the moral sense ought still to be receiv'd, and that upon sufficient evidence: But this evidence must grow upon us, when we find other kinds of virtue, which will not admit of any explication except from that hypothesis. Here is a man, who is not remarkably defective in his social qualities; but what principally recommends him is his dexterity in business, by which he has extricated himself from the greatest difficulties, and conducted the most delicate affairs with a singular address and prudence. I find an esteem for him immediately to arise in me: His company is a satisfaction to me; and before I have any farther acquaintance with him, I wou'd rather do him a service

SECT.  
I.  
Of the  
origin of  
the natu-  
ral vir-  
tues and  
vices.

that  
phenomenon

PART. than another, whose character is in every other respect equal, but is deficient in that particular. In this case, the qualities that please me are all consider'd as useful to the person, and as having a tendency to promote his interest and satisfaction. They are only regarded as means to an end, and please me in proportion to their fitness for that end. The end, therefore, must be agreeable to me. But what makes the end agreeable? The person is a stranger: I am no way interested in him, nor lie under any obligation to him; His happiness concerns not me, farther than the happiness of every human, and indeed of every sensible creature: That is, it affects me only by sympathy. From that principle, whenever I discover his happiness and good, whether in its causes or effects, I enter so deeply into it, that it gives me a sensible emotion. The appearance of qualities, that have a *tendency* to promote it, have an agreeable effect upon my imagination, and command my love and esteem.

III.  
Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.

THIS theory may serve to explain, why the same qualities, in all cases, produce both pride and love, humility and hatred; and the same man is always virtuous or vicious, accomplish'd or despicable to others, who

who is so to himself. A person, in whom SECT.  
we discover any passion or habit, which ori- I.  
ginally is only incommodious to himself, be- *Of the*  
comes always disagreeable to us, merely on *origin of*  
its account; as on the other hand, one *the natu-*  
whose character is only dangerous and dis- *ral vir-*  
agreeable to others, can never be satisfied *tues and*  
with himself, as long as he is sensible of *vices.*  
that disadvantage. Nor is this observable  
only with regard to characters and manners,  
but may be remark'd even in the most mi-  
nute circumstances. A violent cough in  
another gives us uneasiness; tho' in itself it  
does not in the least affect us. A man will  
be mortified, if you tell him he has a stink-  
ing breath; tho' 'tis evidently no annoyance  
to himself. Our fancy easily changes its  
situation; and either surveying ourselves as  
we appear to others, or considering others as  
they feel themselves, ~~we~~ enter, by that  
means, into sentiments, which no way be-  
long to us, and in which nothing but sym-  
pathy is able to interest us. And this sym-  
pathy we sometimes carry so far, as even to  
be displeas'd with a quality commodious to  
us, merely because it displeases others, and *makes us*  
~~makes~~ us disagreeable in their eyes; tho'  
perhaps we never can have any interest in  
rendering ourselves agreeable to them. *renders*



PART

III.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

THERE have been many systems of morality advanc'd by philosophers in all ages; but if they are strictly examin'd, they may be reduc'd to two, which alone merit our attention. Moral good and evil are certainly distinguish'd by our *sentiments*, not by *reason*: But these sentiments may arise either from the mere species or appearance of characters and passions, or from reflections on their tendency to the happiness of mankind, and of particular persons. My opinion is, that both these causes are intermix'd in our judgments of morals; after the same manner as they are in our decisions concerning most kinds of external beauty: Tho' I am also of opinion, that reflections on the tendencies of actions have by far the greatest influence, and determine all the great lines of our duty. There are, however, instances, in cases of less moment, wherein this immediate taste or sentiment produces our approbation. Wit, and a certain easy and disengag'd behaviour, are qualities *immediately agreeable* to others, and command their love and esteem. Some of these qualities produce satisfaction in others by particular *original* principles of human nature, which cannot be accounted for: Others may be resolv'd into principles, which

which are more general. This will best appear upon a particular enquiry. S E C T. I.

As some qualities acquire their merit from their being *immediately agreeable* to others, without any tendency to public interest; so some are denominated virtuous from their being *immediately agreeable* to the person himself, who possesses them. Each of the passions and operations of the mind has a particular feeling, which must be either agreeable or disagreeable. The first is virtuous, the second vicious. This particular feeling constitutes the very nature of the passion; and therefore needs not be accounted for.

BUT however directly the distinction of vice and virtue may seem to flow from the immediate pleasure or uneasiness, which particular qualities cause to ourselves or others; 'tis easy to observe, that it has also a considerable dependence on the principle of *sympathy* so often insisted on. We approve of a person, who is possess'd of qualities *immediately agreeable* to those, with whom he has any commerce; tho' perhaps we ourselves never reap'd any pleasure from them. We also approve of one, who is possess'd of qualities, that are *immediately agreeable* to himself; tho' they be of no service to

PART any mortal. To account for this we must  
 III. have recourse to the foregoing principles.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

THUS, to take a general review of the present hypothesis: Every quality of the mind is denominated virtuous, which gives pleasure by the mere survey; as every quality, which produces pain, is call'd vicious. This pleasure and this pain may arise from four different sources. For we reap a pleasure from the view of a character, which is naturally fitted to be useful to others, or to the person himself, or which is agreeable to others, or to the person himself. One may, perhaps, be surpriz'd, that amidst all these interests and pleasures, we shou'd forget our own, which touch'd us so nearly on every other occasion. But we shall easily satisfy ourselves on this head, when we consider, that every particular person's pleasure and interest being different, 'tis impossible men cou'd ever agree in their sentiments and judgments, unless they chose some common point of view, from which they might survey their object, and which might cause it to appear the same to all of them. Now in judging of characters, the only interest ~~and~~ pleasure, which appears the same to every spectator, is that of the person himself, whose character is examin'd; or that  
 of



of persons, who have a connexion with him. And tho' such interests and pleasures touch us more faintly than our own, yet being more constant and universal, they counter-balance the latter even in practice, and are alone admitted in speculation as the standard of virtue and morality. They alone produce that particular feeling or sentiment, on which moral distinctions depend.

SECT. I.  
Of the origin of the natural virtues and vices.

As to the good or ill desert of virtue or vice, 'tis an evident consequence of the sentiments of pleasure or uneasiness. These sentiments produce love or hatred; and love or hatred, by the original constitution of human passion, is attended with benevolence or anger; that is, with a desire of making happy the person we love, and miserable the person we hate. We have treated of this more fully on another occasion.

## SECT. II.

### *Of greatness of mind.*

IT may now be proper to illustrate this general system of morals, by applying it to particular instances of virtue and vice, and shewing how their merit or demerit

SECT. II.

PART arises from the four sources here explain'd.

III. We shall begin with examining the passions of *pride* and *humility*, and shall consider the vice or virtue that lies in their excesses or just proportion. An excessive pride or over-weening conceit of ourselves is always esteem'd vicious, and is universally hated; as modesty, or a just sense of our weakness, is esteem'd virtuous, and procures the goodwill of every-one. Of the four sources of moral distinctions, this is to be ascrib'd to the *third*; viz. the immediate agreeableness and disagreeableness of a quality to others, without any reflections on the tendency of that quality.

Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.

IN order to prove this, we must have recourse to two principles, which are very conspicuous in human nature. The *first* of these is the *sympathy*, and communication of sentiments and passions above-mention'd. So close and intimate is the correspondence of human souls, that no sooner any person approaches me, than he diffuses on me all his opinions, and draws along my judgment in a greater or lesser degree. And tho', on many occasions, my sympathy with him goes not so far as entirely to change my sentiments, and way of thinking; yet it seldom is so weak as not to disturb the easy course  
of

of my thought, and give an authority to SECT.  
that opinion, which is recommended to me II.  
by his assent and approbation. Nor is it any Of great-  
way material upon what subject he and I ness of  
employ our thoughts. Whether we judge mind.  
of an indifferent person, or of my own character, my sympathy gives equal force to his decision: And even his sentiments of his own merit make me consider him in the same light, in which he regards himself.

THIS principle of sympathy is of so powerful and insinuating a nature, that it enters into most of our sentiments and passions, and often takes place under the appearance of its contrary. For 'tis remarkable, that when a person opposes me in any *sentiment* thing, which I am strongly bent upon, and rouses up my passion by contradiction, I have always a degree of sympathy with him, nor does my commotion proceed from any other origin. We may here observe an evident conflict or rencounter of opposite principles and passions. On the one side there is that passion or sentiment, which is natural to me; and 'tis observable, that the stronger this passion is, the greater is the commotion. There must also be some passion or sentiment on the other side; and this passion can proceed from nothing but sympathy. The  
sentiments



PART sentiments of others can never affect us, but

III. by becoming, in some measure, our own ;

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

in which case they operate upon us, by opposing and encreasing our passions, in the very same manner, as if they had been originally deriv'd from our own temper and disposition. While they remain conceal'd in the minds of others, they can never have any influence upon us : And even when they are known, if they went no farther than the imagination, or conception ; that faculty is so accustom'd to objects of every different kind, that a mere idea, tho' contrary to our sentiments and inclinations, wou'd never alone be able to affect us.

THE *second* principle I shall take notice of is that of *comparison*, or the variation of our judgments concerning objects, according to the proportion they bear to those with which we compare them. We judge more of objects by comparison, than by their intrinsic worth and value ; and regard every thing as mean, when set in opposition to what is superior of the same kind. But no comparison is more obvious than that with ourselves ; and hence it is that on all occasions it takes place, and mixes with most of our passions. This kind of comparison is directly contrary to sympathy in its operation,

tion, as we have observ'd in treating of SECT.  
*compassion and malice.* <sup>a</sup> *In all kinds of com-* II.  
*parison an object makes us always receive* <sup>Of great-</sup>  
*from another, to which it is compar'd, a* <sup>ness of</sup>  
*sensation contrary to what arises from itself* <sup>mind.</sup>  
*in its direct and immediate survey. The*  
*direct survey of another's pleasure naturally*  
*gives us pleasure; and therefore produces pain,*  
*when compar'd with our own. His pain, con-*  
*sider'd in itself, is painful; but augments the*  
*idea of our own happiness, and gives us plea-*  
*sure.*

SINCE then those principles of sympathy, and a comparison with ourselves, are directly contrary, it may be worth while to consider, what general rules can be form'd, beside the particular temper of the person, for the prevalence of the one or the other. Suppose I am now in safety at land, and wou'd willingly reap some pleasure from this consideration: I must think on the miserable condition of those who are at sea in a storm, and must endeavour to render this idea as strong and lively as possible, in order to make me more sensible of my own happiness. But whatever pains I may take, the comparison will never have an equal efficacy,

as

<sup>a</sup> Book II. Part II. Sect. VIII.

PART as if I were really on <sup>b</sup> the shore, and saw  
 III. a ship at a distance, tost by a tempest, and  
 Of the in danger every moment of perishing on a  
 other vir- rock or sand-bank. But suppose this idea  
 tues and to become still more lively. Suppose the  
 vices. ship to be driven so near me, that I can per-  
 ceive distinctly the horror, painted on the  
 countenance of the seamen and passengers,  
 hear their lamentable cries, see the dearest  
 friends give their last adieu, or embrace  
 with a resolution to perish in each others  
 arms: No man has so savage a heart as to  
 reap any pleasure from such a spectacle, or  
 withstand the motions of the tenderest com-  
 passion and sympathy. 'Tis evident, there-  
 fore, there is a medium in this case; and  
 that if the idea be too feint, it has no in-  
 fluence by comparison; and on the other  
 hand, if it be too strong, it operates on us  
 entirely by sympathy, which is the contrary  
 to comparison. Sympathy being the con-  
 version of an idea into an impression, de-  
 mands a greater force and vivacity in the  
 idea than is requisite to comparison.

ALL this is easily applied to the present  
 subject. We sink very much in our own  
 I eyes,

<sup>b</sup> Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis  
 E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;  
 Non quia vexari quæquam est jucunda voluptas,  
 Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suav' est.

*Lucret.*



eyes, when in the presence of a great man, S E C T. II.  
or one of a superior genius; and this humility makes a considerable ingredient in that

*respect*, which we pay our superiors, according to our foregoing reasonings on that passion. Sometimes even envy and hatred arise from the comparison; but in the greatest part of men, it rests at respect and esteem. As sympathy has such a powerful influence on the human mind, it causes pride to have, in some measure, the same effect as merit; and by making us enter into those elevated sentiments, which the proud man entertains of himself, presents that comparison, which is so mortifying and disagreeable. Our judgment does not entirely accompany him in the flattering conceit, in which he pleases himself; but still is so shaken as to receive the idea it presents, and to give it an influence above the loose conceptions of the imagination. A man, who, in an idle humour, wou'd form a notion of a person of a merit very much superior to his own, wou'd not be mortified by that fiction: But when a man, whom we are really persuaded to be of inferior merit, is presented to us; if we observe in him any extraordinary degree of pride and self-conceit; the

*Of greatness of mind.*

PART the firm persuasion he has of his own merit,

III. takes hold of the imagination, and dimi-

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

nishes us in our own eyes, in the same manner, as if he were really possess'd of all the good qualities which he so liberally attributes to himself. Our idea is here precisely in that medium, which is requisite to make it operate on us by comparison. Were it accompanied with belief, and did the person appear to have the same merit, which he assumes to himself, it wou'd have a contrary effect, and wou'd operate on us by sympathy. The influence of that principle wou'd then be superior to that of comparison, contrary to what happens where the person's merit seems below his pretensions.

THE necessary consequence of these principles is, that pride, or an over-weaning conceit of ourselves, must be vicious; since it causes uneasiness in all men, and presents them every moment with a disagreeable comparison. 'Tis a trite observation in philosophy, and even in common life and conversation, that 'tis our own pride, which makes us so much displeas'd with the pride of other people; and that vanity becomes insupportable to us merely because we are vain. The gay naturally associate themselves with the gay, and the amorous with the amorous:

amorous; But the proud never can endure SECT.  
the proud, and rather seek the company of II.  
those who are of an opposite disposition. As Of great-  
we are, all of us, proud in some degree, ness of  
pride is universally blam'd and condemn'd mind.  
by all mankind; as having a natural tendency to cause uneasiness in others by means of comparison. And this effect must follow the more naturally, that those, who have an ill-grounded conceit of themselves, are for ever making those comparisons, nor have they any other method of supporting their vanity. A man of sense and merit is pleas'd with himself, independent of all foreign considerations: But a fool must always find some person, that is more foolish, in order to keep himself in good humour with his own parts and understanding.

BUT tho' an over-weaning conceit of our own merit be vicious and disagreeable, nothing can be more laudable, than to have a value for ourselves, where we really have qualities that are valuable. The utility and advantage of any quality to ourselves is a source of virtue, as well as its agreeableness to others; and 'tis certain, that nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes

us



**PART** us sensible of our own merit, and gives us  
**III.** a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprizes. Whatever capacity

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

any one may be endow'd with, 'tis entirely useless to him, if he be not acquainted with it, and form not designs suitable to it. 'Tis requisite on all occasions to know our own force; and were it allowable to err on either side, 'twou'd be more advantageous to overrate our merit, than to form ideas of it, below its just standard. Fortune commonly favours the bold and enterprising; and nothing inspires us with more boldness than a good opinion of ourselves.

ADD to this, that tho' pride, or self-applause, be sometimes disagreeable to others, 'tis always agreeable to ourselves; as on the other hand, modesty, tho' it give pleasure to every one, who observes it, produces often uneasiness in the person endow'd with it. Now it has been observ'd, that our own sensations determine the vice and virtue of any quality, as well as those sensations, which it may excite in others.

THUS self-satisfaction and vanity may not only be allowable, but requisite in a character. 'Tis, however, certain, that good-breeding and decency require that we shou'd avoid all signs and expressions, which tend  
 directly

directly to show that passion. We have, SECT.  
II.  
all of us, a wonderful partiality for our-

selves, and were we always to give vent to our sentiments in this particular, we shou'd *Of greatness of mind.*

mutually cause the greatest indignation in each other, not only by the immediate presence of so disagreeable a subject of comparison, but also by the contrariety of our judgments. In like manner, therefore, as we establish the *laws of nature*, in order to secure property in society, and prevent the opposition of self-interest; we establish the *rules of good-breeding*, in order to prevent the opposition of men's pride, and render conversation agreeable and inoffensive. Nothing is more disagreeable than a man's overweening conceit of himself: Every one almost has a strong propensity to this vice: No one can well distinguish *in himself* betwixt the vice and virtue, or be certain, that his esteem of his own merit is well-founded: For these reasons, all direct expressions of this passion are condemn'd; nor do we make any exception to this rule in favour of men of sense and merit. They are not allow'd to do themselves justice openly, in words, no more than other people; and even if they show a reserve and secret doubt in doing themselves justice in

PART their own thoughts, they will be more applauded. That impertinent, and almost universal propensity of men, to over-value themselves, has given us such a *prejudice* against self-applause, that we are apt to condemn it, by a *general rule*, wherever we meet with it; and 'tis with some difficulty we give a privilege to men of sense, even in their most *secret* thoughts. At least, it must be own'd, that some disguise in this particular is absolutely requisite; and that if we harbour pride in our breasts, we must carry a fair outside, and have the appearance of modesty and mutual deference in all our conduct and behaviour. We must, on every occasion, be ready to prefer others to ourselves; to treat them with a kind of deference, even tho' they be our equals; to seem always the lowest and least in the company, where we are not very much distinguish'd above them: And if we observe these rules in our conduct, men will have more indulgence for our secret sentiments, when we discover them in an oblique manner.

I BELIEVE no one, who has any practice of the world, and can penetrate into the inward sentiments of men, will assert, that the humility, which good-breeding and decency require of us, goes beyond the outside,



fide, or that a thorough sincerity in this SECT. particular is esteem'd a real part of our duty. II.

On the contrary, we may observe, that a <sup>*Of great-  
ness of  
mind.*</sup> genuine and hearty pride, or self-esteem, if well conceal'd and well founded, is essential to the character of a man of honour, and that there is no quality of the mind, which is more indispensibly requisite to procure the esteem and approbation of mankind. There are certain deferences and mutual submissions, which custom requires of the different ranks of men towards each other; and whoever exceeds in this particular, if thro' interest, is accus'd of meanness; if thro' ignorance, of simplicity. 'Tis necessary, therefore, to know our rank and station in the world, whether it be fix'd by our birth, fortune, employments, talents or reputation. 'Tis necessary to feel the sentiment and passion of pride in conformity to it, and to regulate our actions accordingly. And shou'd it be said, that prudence may suffice to regulate our actions in this particular, without any real pride, I wou'd observe, that here the object of prudence is to conform our actions to the general usage and custom; and that 'tis impossible those tacit airs of superiority shou'd ever have been establish'd

PART and authoriz'd by custom, unless men were  
 III. generally proud, and unless that passion were  
 generally approv'd, when well-grounded.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

IF we pass from common life and conversation to history, this reasoning acquires new force, when we observe, that all those great actions and sentiments, which have become the admiration of mankind, are founded on nothing but pride and self-esteem. Go, says *Alexander* the Great to his soldiers, when they refus'd to follow him to the *Indies*, go tell your countrymen, that you left *Alexander* compleating the conquest of the world. This passage was always particularly admir'd by the prince of *Conde*, as we learn from *St. Evremond*. "*Alexander*," said that prince, "abandon'd by his soldiers, " among barbarians, not yet fully subdu'd, " felt in himself such a dignity and right of " empire, that he cou'd not believe it possi- " ble any one cou'd refuse to obey him. " Whether in *Europe* or in *Asia*, among " *Greeks* or *Persians*, all was indifferent to " him: Wherever he found men, he fancied " he had found subjects."

IN general we may observe, that whatever we call *heroic virtue*, and admire under the character of greatness and elevation of mind, is either nothing but a steady and well-establish'd pride and self-esteem, or  
 partakes

partakes largely of that passion. Courage, SECT. II.  
intrepidity, ambition, love of glory, magnanimity, and all the other shining virtues of that kind, have plainly a strong mixture of self-esteem in them, and derive a great part of their merit from that origin. Accordingly we find, that many religious declaimers decry those virtues as purely pagan and natural, and represent to us the excellency of the *Christian* religion, which places humility in the rank of virtues, and corrects the judgment of the world, and even of philosophers, who so generally admire all the efforts of pride and ambition. Whether this virtue of humility has been rightly understood, I shall not pretend to determine. I am content with the concession, that the world naturally esteems a well-regulated pride, which secretly animates our conduct, without breaking out into such indecent expressions of vanity, as may offend the vanity of others.

THE merit of pride or self-esteem is deriv'd from two circumstances, *viz.* its utility and its agreeableness to ourselves; by which it capacitates us for business, and, at the same time, gives us an immediate satisfaction. When it goes beyond its just bounds, it loses the first advantage, and even becomes prejudicial;



PART judicial; which is the reason why we con-

III. demn an extravagant pride and ambition, however regulated by the decorums of good-breeding and politeness. But as such a passion is still agreeable, and conveys an elevated and sublime sensation to the person, who is actuated by it, the sympathy with that satisfaction diminishes considerably the blame, which naturally attends its dangerous influence on ~~our~~ <sup>his</sup> conduct and behaviour. Accordingly we may observe, that an excessive courage and magnanimity, especially when it displays itself under the frowns of fortune, contributes, in a great measure, to the character of a hero, and will render a person the admiration of posterity; at the same time, that it ruins his affairs, and leads him into dangers and difficulties, with which otherwise he wou'd never have been acquainted.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

HEROISM, or military glory, is much admir'd by the generality of mankind. They consider it as the most sublime kind of merit. Men of cool reflection are not so sanguine in their praises of it. The infinite confusions and disorder, which it has caus'd in the world, diminish much of its merit in their eyes. When they wou'd oppose the popular notions on this head, they  
always

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always paint out the evils, which this sup-  
pos'd virtue has produc'd in human society;  
the subversion of empires, the devastation of  
provinces, the sack of cities. As long as  
these are present to us, we are more inclin'd  
to hate than admire the ambition of heroes.  
But when we fix our view on the person  
himself, who is the author of all this mis-  
chief, there is something so dazling in his  
character, the mere contemplation of it so  
elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it  
our admiration. The pain, which we re-  
ceive from its tendency to the prejudice of  
society, is over-power'd by a stronger and  
more immediate sympathy.

SECT.

II.

*Of great-  
ness of  
mind.*

THUS our explication of the merit or  
demerit, which attends the degrees of pride  
or self-esteem, may serve as a strong argu-  
ment for the preceding hypothesis, by shew-  
ing the effects of those principles above ex-  
plain'd in all the variations of our judgments  
concerning that passion. Nor will this rea-  
soning be advantageous to us only by shew-  
ing, that the distinction of vice and virtue  
arises from the *four* principles of the *advan-  
tage* and of the *pleasure* of the *person him-  
self*, and of *others*: But may also afford us

PART a strong proof of some under-parts of that  
 III. hypothesis.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

No one, who duly considers of this matter, will make any scruple of allowing, that any piece of ill-breeding, or any expression of pride and haughtiness, is displeasing to us, merely because it shocks our own pride, and leads us by sympathy into a comparison, which causes the disagreeable passion of humility. Now as an insolence of this kind is blam'd even in a person who has always been civil to ourselves in particular; nay, in one, whose name is only known to us in history; it follows, that our disapprobation proceeds from a sympathy with others, and from the reflection, that such a character is highly displeasing and odious to every one, who converses or has any intercourse with the person possesst of it. We sympathize with those people in their uneasiness; and as their uneasiness proceeds in part from a sympathy with the person who insults them, we may here observe a double rebound of the sympathy; which is a principle very similar to what we have observ'd on another occasion<sup>a</sup>.

S E C T.

<sup>a</sup> Book II. Part II. Sect. V.



## S E C T. III.

*Of goodness and benevolence.*

HAVING thus explain'd the origin S E C T. III.  
of that praise and approbation, which  
attends every thing we call *great* in human  
affections; we now proceed to give an ac-  
count of their *goodness*, and shew whence its  
merit is deriv'd.

WHEN experience has once given us a competent knowledge of human affairs, and has taught us the proportion they bear to human passion, we perceive, that the generosity of men is very limited, and that it seldom extends beyond their friends and family, or, at most, beyond their native country. Being thus acquainted with the nature of man, we expect not any impossibilities from him; but confine our view to that narrow circle, in which any person moves, in order to form a judgment of his moral character. When the natural tendency of his passions leads him to be serviceable and useful within his sphere, we approve of his character, and love his person, by a sympathy

PART pathy with the sentiments of those, who  
 III. have a more particular connexion with him.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

We are quickly oblig'd to forget our own interest in our judgments of this kind, by reason of the perpetual contradictions, we meet with in society and conversation, from persons that are not plac'd in the same situation, and have not the same interest with ourselves. The only point of view, in which our sentiments concur with those of others, is, when we consider the tendency of any passion to the advantage or harm of those, who have any immediate connexion or intercourse with the person possess'd of it. And tho' this advantage or harm be often very remote from ourselves, yet sometimes 'tis very near us, and interests us strongly by sympathy. This concern we readily extend to other cases, that are resembling; and when these are very remote, our sympathy is proportionably weaker, and our praise or blame fainter and more doubtful. The case is here the same as in our judgments concerning external bodies. All objects seem to diminish by their distance: But tho' the appearance of objects to our senses be the original standard, by which we judge of them, yet we do not say, that they actually diminish by the distance; but correcting the appearance

pearance by reflection, arrive at a more constant and establish'd judgment concerning them. In like manner, tho' sympathy be much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and a sympathy with persons remote from us much fainter than that with persons near and contiguous; yet we neglect all these differences in our calm judgments concerning the characters of men. Besides, that we ourselves often change our situation in this particular, we every day meet with persons, who are in a different situation from ourselves, and who cou'd never converse with us on any reasonable terms, were we to remain constantly in that situation and point of view, which is peculiar to us. The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general inalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners. And tho' the *heart* does not always take part with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them, yet are they sufficient for discourse, and serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools.

SECT.  
III.

*Of goodness and benevolence.*

FROM these principles we may easily account for that merit, which is commonly ascrib'd to *generosity, humanity, compassion, gratitude,*



PART *gratitude, friendship, fidelity, zeal, disinterestedness, liberality,* and all those other

III.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

qualities, which form the character of good and benevolent. A propensity to the tender passions makes a man agreeable and useful in all the parts of life; and gives a just direction to all his other qualities, which otherwise may become prejudicial to society. Courage and ambition, when not regulated by benevolence, are fit only to make a tyrant and public robber. 'Tis the same case with judgment and capacity, and all the qualities of that kind. They are indifferent in themselves to the interests of society, and have a tendency to the good or ill of mankind, according as they are directed by these other passions.

As love is *immediately agreeable* to the person, who is actuated by it, and hatred *immediately disagreeable*; this may also be a considerable reason, why we praise all the passions that partake of the former, and blame all those that have any considerable share of the latter. 'Tis certain we are infinitely touch'd with a tender sentiment, as well as with a great one. The tears naturally start in our eyes at the conception of it; nor can we forbear giving a loose to the same tenderness towards the person who ex-

erts

erts it. All this seems to me a proof, that SEC T.  
our approbation has, in those cases, an origin III.  
different from the prospect of utility and ad- Of good-  
vantage, either to ourselves or others. To ness and  
which we may add, that men naturally, benevo-  
without reflection, approve of that character, lence.  
which is most like their own. The man of  
a mild disposition and tender affections, in  
forming a notion of the most perfect virtue,  
mixes in it more of benevolence and huma-  
nity, than the man of courage and enter-  
prize, who naturally looks upon a certain  
elevation of mind as the most accom-  
plish'd character: This must evidently pro-  
ceed from an *immediate* sympathy, which  
men have with characters similar to their  
own. They enter with more warmth into  
such sentiments, and feel more sensibly the  
pleasure, which arises from them.

"Tis remarkable, that nothing touches a  
man of humanity more than any instance of  
extraordinary delicacy in love or friendship,  
where a person is attentive to the smallest  
concerns of his friend, and is willing to sacri-  
fice to them the most considerable interest of  
his own. Such delicacies have little influence  
on society; because they make us regard the  
greatest trifles: But they are the more en-  
gaging, the more minute the concern is, and

are

PART are a proof of the highest merit in any one,

III. who is capable of them. The passions are so contagious, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts. Where friendship appears in very signal instances, my heart catches the same passion, and is warm'd by those warm sentiments, that display themselves before me. Such agreeable movements must give me an affection to every one that excites them. This is the case with every thing that is agreeable in any person. The transition from pleasure to love is easy: But the transition must here be still more easy; since the agreeable sentiment, which is excited by sympathy, is love itself; and there is nothing requir'd but to change the object.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

HENCE the peculiar merit of benevolence in all its shapes and appearances. Hence even its weaknesses are virtuous and amiable; and a person, whose grief upon the loss of a friend were excessive, wou'd be esteem'd upon that account. His tenderness bestows a merit, as it does a pleasure, on his melancholy.

WE are not, however, to imagine, that all the angry passions are vicious, tho' they are disagreeable. There is a certain indulgence



gence due to human nature in this respect. SECT.

Anger and hatred are passions inherent in III.  
our very frame and constitution. The want Of goodness and benevolence.  
of them, on some occasions, may even be  
a proof of weakness and imbecillity. And

where they appear only in a low degree, we not only excuse them because they are natural; but even bestow our applauses on them, because they are inferior to what appears in the greatest part of mankind.

WHERE these angry passions rise up to cruelty, they form the most detested of all vices. All the pity and concern which we have for the miserable sufferers by this vice, turns against the person guilty of it, and produces a stronger hatred than we are sensible of on any other occasion.

EVEN when the vice of inhumanity rises not to this extreme degree, our sentiments concerning it are very much influenc'd by reflections on the harm that results from it. And we may observe in general, that if we can find any quality in a person, which renders him incommodious to those, who live and converse with him, we always allow it to be a fault or blemish, without any farther examination. On the other hand, when we enumerate the good qualities of any person, we always mention those parts of his character, which

PART which render him a safe companion, an easy

III. friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, or an indulgent father. We consider him with all his relations in society; and love or hate him, according as he affects those, who have any immediate intercourse with him. And 'tis a most certain rule, that if there be no relation of life, in which I cou'd not wish to stand to a particular person, his character must so far be allow'd to be perfect. If he be as little wanting to himself as to others, his character is entirely perfect. This is the ultimate test of merit and virtue.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

## S E C T. IV.

### *Of natural abilities.*

SECT. IV. NO distinction is more usual in all systems of ethics, than that betwixt *natural abilities* and *moral virtues*; where the former are plac'd on the same footing with bodily endowments, and are suppos'd to have no merit or moral worth annex'd to them. Whoever considers the matter accurately, will find, that a dispute upon this head wou'd be merely a dispute of words, and

and that tho' these qualities are not altogether of the same kind, yet they agree in the most material circumstances. They are both of them equally mental qualities: And both of them equally produce pleasure; and have of course an equal tendency to procure the love and esteem of mankind. There are few, who are not as jealous of their character, with regard to sense and knowledge, as to honour and courage; and much more than with regard to temperance and sobriety. Men are even afraid of passing for good-natur'd; lest *that* shou'd be taken for want of understanding: And often boast of more debauches than they have been really engag'd in, to give themselves airs of fire and spirit. In short, the figure a man makes in the world, the reception he meets with in company, the esteem paid him by his acquaintance; all these advantages depend almost as much upon his good sense and judgment, as upon any other part of his character. Let a man have the best intentions in the world, and be the farthest from all injustice and violence, he will never be able to make himself be much regarded, without a moderate share, at least, of parts and understanding. Since then natural abilities, tho', perhaps, inferior, yet are on the

SECT.

IV.

Of natural abilities.



PART same footing, both as to their causes and  
 III. effects, with those qualities which we call  
 moral virtues, why shou'd we make any  
 distinction betwixt them?

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

THO' we refuse to natural abilities the title of virtues, we must allow, that they procure the love and esteem of mankind; that they give a new lustre to the other virtues; and that a man possess'd of them is much more intitled to our good-will and services, than one entirely void of them. It may, indeed, be pretended, that the sentiment of approbation, which those qualities produce, besides its being *inferior*, is also somewhat *different* from that, which attends the other virtues. But this, in my opinion, is not a sufficient reason for excluding them from the catalogue of virtues. Each of the virtues, even benevolence, justice, gratitude, integrity, excites a different sentiment or feeling in the spectator. The characters of *Cæsar* and *Cato*, as drawn by *Sallust*, are both of them virtuous, in the strictest sense of the word; but in a different way: Nor are the sentiments entirely the same, which arise from them. The one produces love; the other esteem: The one is amiable; the other awful: We cou'd wish to meet with the one character in a friend; the other character

rafter we wou'd be ambitious of in ourselves. SECT.

In like manner, the approbation, which at- IV.  
tends natural abilities, may be somewhat *Of natu-  
ral abili-  
ties.*  
different to the feeling from that, which  
arises from the other virtues, without  
making them entirely of a different species.

And indeed we may observe, that the natu-  
ral abilities, no more than the other virtues,  
produce not, all of them, the same kind of  
approbation. Good sense and genius beget  
esteem: Wit and humour excite love<sup>a</sup>.

THOSE, who represent the distinction be-  
twixt natural abilities and moral virtues as  
very material, may say, that the former are  
entirely involuntary, and have therefore no  
merit attending them, as having no depend-  
ance on liberty and free-will. But to this I  
answer, *first*, that many of those qualities,  
which all moralists, especially the antients,  
comprehend under the title of moral virtues,  
are equally involuntary and necessary, with  
the qualities of the judgment and imagina-  
tion.

S 2

<sup>a</sup> Love and esteem are at the bottom the same passions, and  
arise from like causes. The qualities, that produce both, are  
agreeable, and give pleasure. But where this pleasure is se-  
vere and serious; or where its object is great, and makes a  
strong impression; or where it produces any degree of humi-  
lity and awe: In all these cases, the passion, which arises  
from the pleasure, is more properly denominated esteem than  
love. Benevolence attends both: But is connected with love  
in a more eminent degree.

PARTITION. Of this nature are constancy, fortitude, magnanimity; and, in short, all the

III. *Of the other virtues and vices.* qualities which form the *great* man. I might say the same, in some degree, of the others; it being almost impossible for the mind to change its character in any considerable article, or cure itself of a passionate or splenetic temper, when they are natural to it. The greater degree there is of these blameable qualities, the more vicious they become, and yet they are the less voluntary. *Secondly*, I wou'd have any one give me a reason, why virtue and vice may not be involuntary, as well as beauty and deformity. These moral distinctions arise from the natural distinctions of pain and pleasure; and when we receive those feelings from the general consideration of any quality or character, we denominate it vicious or virtuous. Now I believe no one will assert, that a quality can never produce pleasure or pain to the person who considers it, unless it be perfectly voluntary in the person who possesses it. *Thirdly*, As to free-will, we have shewn that it has no place with regard to the actions, no more than the qualities of men. It is not a just consequence, that what is voluntary is free. Our actions are more voluntary than our judgments; but we have



have not more liberty in the one than in the other. SECT.  
IV.

BUT tho' this distinction betwixt voluntary and involuntary be not sufficient to justify the distinction betwixt natural abilities and moral virtues, yet the former distinction will afford us a plausible reason, why moralists have invented the latter. Men have observ'd, that tho' natural abilities and moral qualities be in the main on the same footing, there is, however, this difference betwixt them, that the former are almost invariable by any art or industry; while the latter, or at least, the actions, that proceed from them, may be chang'd by the motives of reward and punishments, praise and blame. Hence legislators, and divines, and moralists, have principally applied themselves to the regulating these voluntary actions, and have endeavour'd to produce additional motives for being virtuous in that particular. They knew, that to punish a man for folly, or exhort him to be prudent and sagacious, wou'd have but little effect; tho' the same punishments and exhortations, with regard to justice and injustice, might have a considerable influence. But as men, in common life and conversation, do not carry those ends in view, but naturally praise or blame

PART whatever pleases or displeases them, they do  
 III. not seem much to regard this distinction, but  
 consider prudence under the character of virtue as well as benevolence, and penetration as well as justice. Nay, we find, that all moralists, whose judgment is not perverted by a strict adherence to a system, enter into the same way of thinking; and that the antient moralists in particular made no scruple of placing prudence at the head of the cardinal virtues. There is a sentiment of esteem and approbation, which may be excited, in some degree, by any faculty of the mind, in its perfect state and condition; and to account for this sentiment is the business of *Philosophers*. It belongs to *Grammarians* to examine what qualities are entitled to the denomination of *virtue*; nor will they find, upon trial, that this is so easy a task, as at first sight they may be apt to imagine.

Of the  
 other virtues and  
 vices.

THE principal reason why natural abilities are esteem'd, is because of their tendency to be useful to the person, who is possess'd of them. 'Tis impossible to execute any design with success, where it is not conducted with prudence and discretion; nor will the goodness of our intentions alone suffice to procure us a happy issue to our enterprizes.

Men

Men are superior to beasts principally by the S E C T.  
superiority of their reason; and they are the IV.  
degrees of the same faculty, which set such  
an infinite difference betwixt one man and another. All the advantages of art are owing  
to human reason; and where fortune is not  
very capricious, the most considerable part  
of these advantages must fall to the share of  
the prudent and sagacious.

*Of natural abilities.*

WHEN it is ask'd, whether a quick or a slow apprehension be most valuable? whether one, that at first view penetrates into a subject, but can perform nothing upon study; or a contrary character, which must work out every thing by dint of application? whether a clear head, or a copious invention? whether a profound genius, or a sure judgment? in short, what character, or peculiar understanding, is more excellent than another? 'Tis evident we can answer none of these questions, without considering which of those qualities capacitates a man best for the world, and carries him farthest in any of his undertakings.

THERE are many other qualities of the mind, whose merit is deriv'd from the same origin. *Industry, perseverance, patience, activity, vigilance, application, constancy*, with other virtues of that kind, which 'twill be



PART. easy to recollect, are esteem'd valuable upon  
 III. no other account, than their advantage in  
 the conduct of life. 'Tis the same case with  
*Of the other virtues and vices.* *temperance, frugality, oeconomy, resolution:*  
 As on the other hand, *prodigality, luxury, irresolution, uncertainty,* are vicious, merely because they draw ruin upon us, and incapacitate us for business and action.

As wisdom and good-sense are valued, because they are *useful* to the person possess'd of them; so *wit* and *eloquence* are valued, because they are *immediately agreeable* to others. On the other hand, *good humour* is lov'd and esteem'd, because it is *immediately agreeable* to the person himself. 'Tis evident, that the conversation of a man of wit is very satisfactory; as a chearful good-humour'd companion diffuses a joy over the whole company, from a sympathy with his gaiety. These qualities, therefore, being agreeable, they naturally beget love and esteem, and answer to all the characters of virtue.

'Tis difficult to tell, on many occasions, what it is that renders one man's conversation so agreeable and entertaining, and another's so insipid and distasteful. As conversation is a transcript of the mind as well as books, the same qualities, which render the one  
 valuable,

valuable, must give us an esteem for the S E C T.  
other. This we shall consider afterwards. IV.

In the mean time it may be affirm'd in general, that all the merit a man may derive from his conversation (which, no doubt, may be very considerable) arises from nothing but the pleasure it conveys to those who are present. *Of natural abilities.*

IN this view, *cleanliness* is also to be regarded as a virtue; since it naturally renders us agreeable to others, and is a very considerable source of love and affection. No one will deny, that a negligence in this particular is a fault; and as faults are nothing but smaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneasy sensation, which it excites in others, we may in this instance, seemingly so trivial, clearly discover the origin of the moral distinction of vice and virtue in other instances.

BESIDES all those qualities, which render a person lovely or valuable, there is also a certain *je-ne-sçai-quoi* of agreeable and handsome, that concurs to the same effect. In this case, as well as in that of wit and eloquence, we must have recourse to a certain sense, which acts without reflection, and regards not the tendencies of qualities and characters. Some moralists account for all the

PART the sentiments of virtue by this sense. Their

III. hypothesis is very plausible. Nothing but a particular enquiry can give the preference to any other hypothesis. When we find, that almost all the virtues have such particular tendencies; and also find, that these tendencies are sufficient alone to give a strong sentiment of approbation: We cannot doubt, after this, that qualities are approv'd of, in proportion to the advantage, which results from them.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

THE *decorum* or *indecorum* of a quality, with regard to the age, or character, or station, contributes also to its praise or blame. This *decorum* depends, in a great measure, upon experience. 'Tis usual to see men lose their levity, as they advance in years. Such a degree of gravity, therefore, and such years, are connected together in our thoughts. When we observe them separated in any person's character, this imposes a kind of violence on our imagination, and is disagreeable.

THAT faculty of the soul, which, of all others, is of the least consequence to the character, and has the least virtue or vice in its several degrees, at the same time, that it admits of a great variety of degrees, is the *memory*. Unless it rise up to that stupendous



dous height as to surprize us, or sink so low SECT.  
as, in some measure, to affect the judgment, IV.

we commonly take no notice of its variations, nor ever mention them to the praise Of natural abilities.  
or dispraise of any person. 'Tis so far from

being a virtue to have a good memory, that men generally affect to complain of a bad one; and endeavouring to persuade the world, that what they say is entirely of their own invention, sacrifice it to the praise of genius and judgment. Yet to consider the matter abstractedly, 'twou'd be difficult to give a reason, why the faculty of recalling past ideas with truth and clearness, shou'd not have as much merit in it, as the faculty of placing our present ideas in such an order, as to form true propositions and opinions. The reason of the difference certainly must be, that the memory is exerted without any sensation of pleasure or pain; and in all its middling degrees serves almost equally well in business and affairs. But the least variations in the judgment are sensibly felt in their consequences; while at the same time that faculty is never exerted in any eminent degree, without an extraordinary delight and satisfaction. The sympathy with this utility and pleasure bestows a merit on the understanding; and the absence of it makes us  
consider

PART consider the memory as a faculty very in-  
 III. different to blame or praise.

*Of the  
 other vir-  
 tues and  
 vices.*

BEFORE I leave this subject of *natural abilities*, I must observe, that, perhaps, one source of the esteem and affection, which attends them, is deriv'd from the *importance* and *weight*, which they bestow on the person possess'd of them. He becomes of greater consequence in life. His resolutions and actions affect a greater number of his fellow-creatures. Both his friendship and enmity are of moment. And 'tis easy to observe, that whoever is elevated, after this manner, above the rest of mankind, must excite in us the sentiments of esteem and approbation. Whatever is important engages our attention, fixes our thought, and is contemplated with satisfaction. The histories of kingdoms are more interesting than domestic stories: The histories of great empires more than those of small cities and principalities: And the histories of wars and revolutions more than those of peace and order. We sympathize with the persons that suffer, in all the various sentiments which belong to their fortunes. The mind is occupied by the multitude of the objects, and by the strong passions, that display themselves. And this occupation or agitation of the mind is  
commonly

commonly agreeable and amusing. The same S E C T.  
 theory accounts for the esteem and regard IV.  
 we pay to men of extraordinary parts and Of natu-  
 ral abili-  
 ties.  
 abilities. The good and ill of multitudes  
 are connected with their actions. Whatever  
 they undertake is important, and challenges  
 our attention. Nothing is to be over-look'd  
 and despis'd, that regards them. And where  
 any person can excite these sentiments, he  
 soon acquires our esteem; unless other cir-  
 cumstances of his character render him  
 odious and disagreeable.

## S E C T. V.

*Some farther reflections concerning  
 the natural virtues.*

**I**T has been observ'd, in treating of the S E C T.  
 passions, that pride and humility, love V.  
 and hatred, are excited by any advantages or  
 disadvantages of the *mind, body, or fortune*;  
 and that these advantages or disadvantages  
 have that effect by producing a separate im-  
 pression of pain or pleasure. The pain or  
 pleasure, which arises from the general sur-  
 vey or view of any action or quality of the  
*mind*, constitutes its vice or virtue, and gives  
rise



PART rise to our approbation or blame, which is  
 III. nothing but a fainter and more imperceptible  
 love or hatred. We have assign'd four different sources of this pain and pleasure; and in order to justify more fully that hypothesis, it may here be proper to observe, that the advantages or disadvantages of the *body* and of *fortune*, produce a pain or pleasure from the very same principles. The tendency of any object to be *useful* to the person possess'd of it, or to others; to convey *pleasure* to him or to others; all these circumstances convey an immediate pleasure to the person, who considers the object, and command his love and approbation.

Of the  
 other virtues and  
 vices.

To begin with the advantages of the *body*; we may observe a phænomenon, which might appear somewhat trivial and ludicrous, if any thing cou'd be trivial, which fortified a conclusion of such importance, or ludicrous, which was employ'd in a philosophical reasoning. 'Tis a general remark, that those we call good *women's men*, who have either signaliz'd themselves by their amorous exploits, or whose make of body promises any extraordinary vigour of that kind, are well received by the fair sex, and naturally engage the affections even of those, whose virtue prevents any design of ever giving employment

to

to those talents. Here 'tis evident, that the ability of such a person to give enjoyment, is the real source of that love and esteem he meets with among the females; at the same time that the women, who love and esteem him, have no prospect of receiving that enjoyment themselves, and can only be affected by means of their sympathy with one, that has a commerce of love with him. This instance is singular, and merits our attention.

SECT.  
V.*Some farther reflections concerning the natural virtues.*

ANOTHER source of the pleasure we receive from considering bodily advantages, is their utility to the person himself, who is possess'd of them. 'Tis certain, that a considerable part of the beauty of men, as well as of other animals, consists in such a conformation of members, as we find by experience to be attended with strength and agility, and to capacitate the creature for any action or exercise. Broad shoulders, a lank belly, firm joints, taper legs; all these are beautiful in our species, because they are signs of force and vigour, which being advantages we naturally sympathize with, they convey to the beholder a share of that satisfaction they produce in the possessor.

So far as to the *utility*, which may attend any quality of the body. As to the immediate

PART diate *pleasure*, 'tis certain, that an air of health, as well as of strength and agility, makes a considerable part of beauty; and that a sickly air in another is always disagreeable, upon account of that idea of pain and uneasiness, which it conveys to us. On the other hand, we are pleas'd with the regularity of our own features, tho' it be neither useful to ourselves nor others; and 'tis necessary for us, in some measure, to set ourselves at a distance, to make it convey to us any satisfaction. We commonly consider ourselves as we appear in the eyes of others, and sympathize with the advantageous sentiments they entertain with regard to us.

III.  
Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.

How far the advantages of *fortune* produce esteem and approbation from the same principles, we may satisfy ourselves by reflecting on our precedent reasoning on that subject. We have observ'd, that our approbation of those, who are possess'd of the advantages of fortune, may be ascrib'd to three different causes. *First*, To that immediate pleasure, which a rich man gives us, by the view of the beautiful cloaths, equipage, gardens, or houses, which he possesses. *Secondly*, To the advantage, which we hope to reap from him by his generosity and liberality. *Thirdly*, To the pleasure and advantage,



tage, which he himself reaps from his pos-  
sessions, and which produce an agreeable  
sympathy in us. Whether we ascribe our  
esteem of the rich and great to one or all of  
these causes, we may clearly see the traces of  
those principles, which give rise to the sense  
of vice and virtue. I believe most people,  
at first sight, will be inclin'd to ascribe our  
esteem of the rich to self-interest, and the  
prospect of advantage. But as 'tis certain,  
that our esteem or deference extends beyond  
any prospect of advantage to ourselves, 'tis  
evident, that that sentiment must proceed  
from a sympathy with those, who are de-  
pendent on the person we esteem and respect,  
and who have an immediate connexion with  
him. We consider him as a person capable  
of contributing to the happiness or enjoy-  
ment of his fellow-creatures, whose senti-  
ments, with regard to him, we naturally  
embrace. And this consideration will serve  
to justify my hypothesis in preferring the  
*third* principle to the other two, and ascribing  
our esteem of the rich to a sympathy with  
the pleasure and advantage, which they them-  
selves receive from their possessions. For as  
even the other two principles cannot operate  
to a due extent, or account for all the phæ-  
nomena, without having recourse to a sym-  
pathy

S E C T.

V.

*Some farther  
reflections  
concerning  
the natu-  
ral vir-  
tues.*

PART pathy of one kind or other; 'tis much more

III.

*Of the  
other vir-  
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natural to chuse that sympathy, which is immediate and direct, than that which is remote and indirect. To which we may add, that where the riches or power are very great, and render the person considerable and important in the world, the esteem attending them, may, in part, be ascrib'd to another source, distinct from these three, *viz.* their interesting the mind by a prospect of the multitude, and importance of their consequences: Tho', in order to account for the operation of this principle, we must also have recourse to *sympathy*; as we have observ'd in the preceding section.

It may not be amiss, on this occasion, to remark the flexibility of our sentiments, and the several changes they so readily receive from the objects, with which they are conjoin'd. All the sentiments of approbation, which attend any particular species of objects, have a great resemblance to each other, tho' deriv'd from different sources; and, on the other hand, those sentiments, when directed to different objects, are different to the feeling, tho' deriv'd from the same source. Thus the beauty of all visible objects causes a pleasure pretty much the same, tho' it be sometimes deriv'd from the mere *species* and appearance

appearance of the objects; sometimes from S E C T. V.  
sympathy, and an idea of their utility. In

like manner, whenever we survey the actions and characters of men, without any particular interest in them, the pleasure, or pain, which arises from the survey (with some minute differences) is, in the main, of the same kind, tho' perhaps there be a great diversity in the causes, from which it is deriv'd. On the other hand, a convenient house, and a virtuous character, cause not the same feeling of approbation; even tho' the source of our approbation be the same, and flow from sympathy and an idea of their utility. There is something very inexplicable in this variation of our feelings; but 'tis what we have experience of with regard to all our passions and sentiments.

*Some farther considerations concerning the natural virtues.*

## S E C T. VI.

### *Conclusion of this book.*

**T**HUS upon the whole I am hopeful, S E C T. IV.  
that nothing is wanting to an accurate proof of this system of ethics. We are certain, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature. We are also



PART certain, that it has a great influence on our

III. sense of beauty, when we regard external  
*Of the other virtues and vices.* objects, as well as when we judge of morals.  
 We find, that it has force sufficient to give us the strongest sentiments of approbation, when it operates alone, without the concurrence of any other principle; as in the cases of justice, allegiance, chastity, and good-manners. We may observe, that all the circumstances requisite for its operation are found in most of the virtues; which have, for the most part, a tendency to the good of society, or to that of the person possess'd of them. If we compare all these circumstances, we shall not doubt, that sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions; especially when we reflect, that no objection can be rais'd against this hypothesis in one case, which will not extend to all cases. Justice is certainly approv'd of for no other reason, than because it has a tendency to the public good: And the public good is indifferent to us, except so far as sympathy interests us in it. We may presume the like with regard to all the other virtues, which have a like tendency to the public good. They must derive all their merit from our sympathy with those, who reap any advantage from them: As the virtues, which have a tendency

tendency to the good of the person possess'd S E C T.  
of them, derive their merit from our sym- VI.  
pathy with him.

*Conclusion  
of this  
book.*

MOST people will readily allow, that the useful qualities of the mind are virtuous, because of their utility. This way of thinking is so natural, and occurs on so many occasions, that few will make any scruple of admitting it. Now this being once admitted, the force of sympathy must necessarily be acknowledg'd. Virtue is consider'd as means to an end. Means to an end are only valued so far as the end is valued. But the happiness of strangers affects us by sympathy alone. To that principle, therefore, we are to ascribe the sentiment of approbation, which arises from the survey of all those virtues, that are useful to society, or to the person possess'd of them. These form the most considerable part of morality.

WERE it proper in such a subject to bribe the readers assent, or employ any thing but solid argument, we are here abundantly supplied with topics to engage the affections. All lovers of virtue (and such we all are in speculation, however we may degenerate in practice) must certainly be pleas'd to see

PART moral distinctions deriv'd from so noble a source, which gives us a just notion both of

III.

*Of the  
other vir-  
tues and  
vices.*

the *generosity* and *capacity* of ~~human~~ nature.

It requires but very little knowledge of human affairs to perceive, that a sense of morals is a principle inherent in the soul, and one of the most powerful that enters into the composition. But this sense must certainly acquire new force, when reflecting on itself, it approves of those principles, from whence it is deriv'd, and finds nothing but what is great and good in its rise and origin. Those who resolve the sense of morals into original instincts of the human mind, may defend the cause of virtue with sufficient authority; but want the advantage, which those possess, who account for that sense by an extensive sympathy with mankind. According to ~~their~~ system, not only virtue must be approv'd of, but also the sense of virtue: And not only that sense, but also the principles, from whence it is deriv'd. So that nothing is presented on any side, but what is laudable and good.

THIS observation may be extended to justice, and the other virtues of that kind. Tho' justice be artificial, the sense of its morality is natural. 'Tis the combination of men, in a system of conduct, which renders any



any act of justice beneficial to society. But SECT.  
when once it has that tendency, we *natu-* VI.  
*rally* approve of it; and if we did not so, Conclusion  
'tis impossible any combination or convention of this  
cou'd ever produce that sentiment. book.

MOST of the inventions of men are subject to change. They depend upon humour and caprice. They have a vogue for a time, and then sink into oblivion. It may, perhaps, be apprehended, that if justice were allow'd to be a human invention, it must be plac'd on the same footing. But the cases are widely different. The interest, on which justice is founded, is the greatest imaginable, and extends to all times and places. It cannot possibly be serv'd by any other invention. It is obvious, and discovers itself on the very first formation of society. All these causes render the rules of justice stedfast and immutable; at least, as immutable as human nature. And if they were founded on original instincts, cou'd they have any greater stability?

THE same system may help us to form a just notion of the *happiness*, as well as of the *dignity* of virtue, and may interest every principle of our nature in the embracing and cherishing that noble quality. Who indeed does not feel an accession of alacrity in

PART his pursuits of knowledge and ability of  
 III. every kind, when he considers, that besides  
 Of the the advantage, which immediately result  
 other vir- from these acquisitions, they also give him a  
 tues and new lustre in the eyes of mankind, and are  
 vices, universally attended with esteem and appro-  
 bation? And who can think any advantages  
 of fortune a sufficient compensation for the  
 least breach of the *social* virtues, when he  
 considers, that not only his character with  
 regard to others, but also his peace and in-  
 ward satisfaction entirely depend upon his  
 strict observance of them; and that a mind  
 will never be able to bear its own survey,  
 that has been wanting in its part to man-  
 kind and society? But I forbear insisting on  
 this subject. Such reflections require a work  
 a-part, very different from the genius of the  
 present. The anatomist ought never to emu-  
 late the painter; nor in his accurate dis-  
 sections and portraitures of the smaller parts  
 of the human body, pretend to give his  
 figures any graceful and engaging attitude or  
 expression. There is even something hideous,  
 or at least minute in the views of things,  
 which he presents; and 'tis necessary the ob-  
 jects shou'd be set more at a distance, and be  
 more cover'd up from sight, to make them  
 engaging to the eye and imagination. An  
 anatomist,

anatomist, however, is admirably fitted to SECT.  
give advice to a painter; and 'tis even im- VI.  
practicable to excel in the latter art, with-  
out the assistance of the former. We must Conclusion  
of this  
book.  
have an exact knowledge of the parts, their  
situation and connexion, before we can de-  
sign with any elegance or correctness. And  
thus the most abstract speculations concern-  
ing human nature, however cold and un-  
entertaining, become subservient to *practi-  
cal morality*; and may render this latter sci-  
ence more correct in its precepts, and more  
persuasive in its exhortations.









# APPENDIX.

**T**HERE is nothing I wou'd more willingly lay hold of, than an opportunity of confessing my errors; and shou'd esteem such a return to truth and reason to be more honourable than the most unerring judgment. A man, who is free from mistakes, can pretend to no praises, except from the justness of his understanding: But a man, who corrects his mistakes, shews at once the justness of his understanding, and the candour and ingenuity of his temper. I have not yet been so fortunate as to discover any very considerable mistakes in the reasonings deliver'd in the preceding volumes, except on one article: But I have found by experience, that some of my expressions have not been so well chosen, as to guard against all mistakes in the readers; and 'tis chiefly to remedy this defect, I have subjoin'd the following appendix.

WE

We can never be induc'd to believe any matter of fact, except where its cause, or its effect, is present to us; but what the nature is of that belief, which arises from the relation of cause and effect, few have had the curiosity to ask themselves. In my opinion, this dilemma is inevitable. Either the belief is some new idea, such as that of *reality* or *existence*, which we join to the simple conception of an object, or it is merely a peculiar *feeling* or *sentiment*. That it is not a new idea, annex'd to the simple conception, may be evinc'd from these two arguments. *First*, We have no abstract idea of existence, distinguishable and separable from the idea of particular objects. 'Tis impossible, therefore, that this idea of existence can be annex'd to the idea of any object, or form the difference betwixt a simple conception and belief. *Secondly*, The mind has the command over all its ideas, and can separate, unite, mix, and vary them, as it pleases; so that if belief consisted merely in a new idea, annex'd to the conception, it wou'd be in a man's power to believe what he pleas'd. We may, therefore, conclude, that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment; in something, that depends



pende not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles, of which we are not masters. When we are convinc'd of any matter of fact, we do nothing but conceive it, along with a certain feeling, different from what attends the mere *reveries* of the imagination. And when we express our incredulity concerning any fact, we mean, that the arguments for the fact produce not that feeling. Did not the belief consist in a sentiment different from our mere conception, whatever objects were presented by the wildest imagination, wou'd be on an equal footing with the most establish'd truths founded on history and experience. There is nothing but the feeling, or sentiment, to distinguish the one from the other.

THIS, therefore, being regarded as an undoubted truth, *that belief is nothing but a peculiar feeling, different from the simple conception*, the next question, that naturally occurs, is, *what is the nature of this feeling, or sentiment, and whether it be analogous to any other sentiment of the human mind?* This question is important. For if it be not analogous to any other sentiment, we must despair of explaining its causes, and must consider it as an original principle of the human mind.

mind. If it be analogous, we may hope to explain its causes from analogy, and trace it up to more general principles. Now that there is a greater firmness and solidity in the conceptions, which are the objects of conviction and assurance, than in the loose and indolent reveries of a castle-builder, every one will readily own. They strike upon us with more force; they are more present to us; the mind has a firmer hold of them, and is more actuated and mov'd by them. It acquiesces in them; and, in a manner, fixes and reposes itself on them. In short, they approach nearer to the impressions, which are immediately present to us; and are therefore analogous to many other operations of the mind.

THERE is not, in my opinion, any possibility of evading this conclusion, but by asserting, that belief, beside the simple conception, consists in some impression or feeling, distinguishable from the conception. It does not modify the conception, and render it more present and intense: It is only annex'd to it, after the same manner that *will* and *desire* are annex'd to particular conceptions of good and pleasure. But the following considerations will, I hope, be sufficient to remove this hypothesis. *First*, It is directly

directly contrary to experience, and our immediate consciousness. All men have ever allow'd reasoning to be merely an operation of our thoughts or ideas; and however those ideas may be varied to the feeling, there is nothing ever enters into our *conclusions* but ideas, or our fainter conceptions. For instance; I hear at present a person's voice, whom I am acquainted with; and this sound comes from the next room. This impression of my senses immediately conveys my thoughts to the person, along with all the surrounding objects. I paint them out to myself as existent at present, with the same qualities and relations, that I formerly knew them possess'd of. These ideas take faster hold of my mind, than the ideas of an enchanted castle. They are different to the feeling; but there is no distinct or separate impression attending them. 'Tis the same case when I recollect the several incidents of a journey, or the events of any history. Every particular fact is there the object of belief. Its idea is modified differently from the loose reveries of a castle-builder: But no distinct impression attends every distinct idea, or conception of matter of fact. This is the subject of plain experience. If ever this experience can be disputed on any occasion,



caſion, 'tis when the mind has been agitated with doubts and difficulties; and afterwards, upon taking the object in a new point of view, or being preſented with a new argument, fixes and repoſes itſelf in one ſettled concluſion and belief. In this caſe there is a feeling diſtinct and ſeparate from the conception. The paſſage from doubt and agitation to tranquility and repoſe, conveys a ſatisfaction and pleaſure to the mind. But take any other caſe. Suppoſe I ſee the legs and thighs of a perſon in motion, while ſome interpoſ'd object conceals the reſt of his body. Here 'tis certain, the imagination ſpreads out the whole figure. I give him a head and ſhoulders, and breaſt and neck. Theſe members I conceive and believe him to be poſſeſs'd of. Nothing can be more evident, than that this whole operation is perform'd by the thought or imagination alone. The tranſition is immediate. The ideas preſently ſtrike us. Their cuſtomary connexion with the preſent impreſſion, varies them and modifies them in a certain manner, but produces no act of the mind, diſtinct from this peculiarity of conception. Let any one examine his own mind, and he will evidently find this to be the truth.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Whatever may be the case, with regard to this distinct impression, it must be allow'd, that the mind has a firmer hold, or more steady conception of what it takes to be matter of fact, than of fictions. Why then look any farther, or multiply suppositions without necessity?

*Thirdly*, We can explain the *causes* of the firm conception, but not those of any separate impression. And not only so, but the causes of the firm conception exhaust the whole subject, and nothing is left to produce any other effect. An inference concerning a matter of fact is nothing but the idea of an object, that ~~is~~ frequently conjoin'd, or is associated with a present impression. This is the whole of it. Every part is requisite to explain, from analogy, the more steady conception; and nothing remains capable of producing any distinct impression.

*has been*

*Fourthly*, The *effects* of belief, in influencing the passions and imagination, can all be explain'd from the firm conception; and there is no occasion to have recourse to any other principle. These arguments, with many others, enumerated in the foregoing volumes, sufficiently prove, that belief only modifies the idea or conception; and renders

it different to the feeling, without producing any distinct impression.

THUS upon a general view of the subject, there appear to be two questions of importance, which we may venture to recommend to the consideration of philosophers, *Whether there be any thing to distinguish belief from the simple conception beside the feeling or sentiment? And, Whether this feeling be any thing but a firmer conception, or a faster hold, that we take of the object?*

IF, upon impartial enquiry, the same conclusion, that I have form'd, be assented to by philosophers, the next business is to examine the analogy, which there is betwixt belief, and other acts of the mind, and find the cause of the firmness and strength of conception: And this I do not esteem a difficult task. The transition from a present impression, always enlivens and strengthens any idea. When any object is presented, the idea of its usual attendant immediately strikes us, as something real and solid. 'Tis felt, rather than conceiv'd, and approaches the impression, from which it is deriv'd, in its force and influence. This I have prov'd at large. I cannot add any new arguments; tho' perhaps my reasoning on this whole question, concerning cause and effect, wou'd have



have been more convincing, had the following passages been inserted in the places, which I have mark'd for them. I have added a few illustrations on other points, where I thought it necessary.

*To be inserted in Vol. I. page 153. line 12.  
after these words (fainter and more obscure.) beginning a new paragraph.*

It frequently happens, that when two men have been engag'd in any scene of action, the one shall remember it much better than the other, and shall have all the difficulty in the world to make his companion recollect it. He runs over several circumstances in vain; mentions the time, the place, the company, what was said, what was done on all sides; till at last he hits on some lucky circumstance, that revives the whole, and gives his friend a perfect memory of every thing. Here the person that forgets receives at first all the ideas from the discourse of the other, with the same circumstances of time and place; tho' he considers them as mere fictions of the imagination. But as soon as the circumstance is mention'd, that touches the memory, the very same ideas now appear in a new light, and have,

in a manner, a different feeling from what they had before. Without any other alteration, beside that of the feeling, they become immediately ideas of the memory, and are assented to.

SINCE, therefore, the imagination can represent all the same objects that the memory can offer to us, and since those faculties are only distinguish'd by the different *feeling* of the ideas they present, it may be proper to consider what is the nature of that feeling. And here I believe every one will readily agree with me, that the ideas of the memory are more *strong* and *lively* than those of the fancy. A painter, who intended, &c.

*To be inserted Vol. I. page 174. line 8. after these words (according to the foregoing definition.) beginning a new paragraph.*

THIS operation of the mind, which forms the belief of any matter of fact, seems hitherto to have been one of the greatest mysteries of philosophy; tho' no one has so much as suspected, that there was any difficulty in explaining it. For my part I must own, that I find a considerable difficulty in the case; and that even when I think I understand the subject perfectly, I am at a  
loss

loss for terms to express my meaning. I conclude, by an induction which seems to me very evident, that an opinion or belief is nothing but an idea, that is different from a fiction, not in the nature, or the order of its parts, but in the *manner* of its being conceiv'd. But when I wou'd explain this *manner*, I scarce find any word that fully answers the case, but am oblig'd to have recourse to every one's feeling, in order to give him a perfect notion of this operation of the mind. An idea assented to *feels* different from a fictitious idea, that the fancy alone presents to us: And this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior *force*, or *vivacity*, or *solidity*, or *firmness*, or *steadiness*. This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is intended only to express that act of the mind, which renders realities more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination. Provided we agree about the thing, 'tis needless to dispute about the terms. The imagination has the command over all its ideas, and can join, and mix, and vary them in all the ways possible. It may conceive objects with all the circumstances of place and time. It may set them,



in a manner, before our eyes in their true colours, just as they might have existed. But as it is impossible, that that faculty can ever, of itself, reach belief, 'tis evident, that belief consists not in the nature and order of our ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their feeling to the mind. I confess, that 'tis impossible to explain perfectly this feeling or manner of conception. We may make use of words, that express something near it. But its true and proper name is *belief*, which is a term that every one sufficiently understands in common life. And in philosophy we can go no farther, than assert, that it is something *felt* by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more force and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; infixes them in the mind; and renders them the governing principles of all our actions.

*A note to Vol. I. page 179. line 19. after these words (immediate impression.)*

*Naturane nobis, inquit, datum dicam, an errore quodam, ut, cum ea loca videamus, in quibus memoria dignos viros acceperimus mul-*

*tum*

*tum esse versatos, magis moveamur, quam si quando eorum ipsorum aut facta audiamus, aut scriptum aliquod legamus? velut ego nunc moveor. Venit enim mihi Platonis in mentem: quem accipimus primum hic disputare solitum: Cujus etiam illi hortuli propinqui non memoriam solum mihi afferunt, sed ipsum videntur in conspectu meo hic ponere. Hic Speusippus, hic Xenocrates, hic ejus auditor Polemo; cujus ipsa illa sessio fuit, quam videamus. Equidem etiam curiam nostram, hostiliam dico, non hanc novam, quæ mihi minor esse videtur postquam est major, solebam intuens Scipionem, Catonem, Lælium, nostrum vero in primis avum cogitare. Tanta vis admonitionis inest in locis; ut non sine causa ex his memoriæ ducta sit disciplina. Cicero de Finibus, lib. 5.*

*To be inserted in Vol. I. page 218. line 21.  
after these words (impressions of the senses.)  
beginning a new paragraph.*

WE may observe the same effect of poetry in a lesser degree; and this is common both to poetry and madness, that the vivacity they bestow on the ideas is not deriv'd from the particular situations or connexions of the objects of these ideas, but from the present temper and disposition of the person. But

how great soever the pitch may be, to which this vivacity rises; 'tis evident, that in poetry it never has the same *feeling* with that which arises in the mind, when we reason, tho' even upon the lowest species of probability. The mind can easily distinguish betwixt the one and the other; and whatever emotion the poetical enthusiasm may give to the spirits, 'tis still the mere phantom of belief or persuasion. The case is the same with the idea, as with the passion it occasions. There is no passion of the human mind but what may arise from poetry; tho' at the same time the *feelings* of the passions are very different when excited by poetical fictions, from what they are when they arise from belief and reality. A passion, which is disagreeable in real life, may afford the highest entertainment in a tragedy, or epic poem. In the latter case it lies not with that weight upon us: It feels less firm and solid: And has no other than the agreeable effect of exciting the spirits, and rousing the attention. The difference in the passions is a clear proof of a like difference in those ideas, from which the passions are deriv'd. Where the vivacity arises from a customary conjunction with a present impression; tho' the imagination may not, in appearance, be so much



much mov'd; yet there is always something more forcible and real in its actions, than in the fervors of poetry and eloquence. The force of our mental actions in this case, no more than in any other, is not to be measur'd by the apparent agitation of the mind. A poetical description may have a more sensible effect on the fancy, than an historical narration. It may collect more of those circumstances, that form a compleat image or picture. It may seem to set the object before us in more lively colours. But still the ideas it presents are different to the *feeling* from those, which arise from the memory and the judgment. There is something weak and imperfect amidst all that seeming vehemence of thought and sentiment, which attends the fictions of poetry.

WE shall afterwards have occasion to remark both the resemblances and differences betwixt a poetical enthusiasm, and a serious conviction. In the mean time I cannot forbear observing, that the great difference in their feeling proceeds in some measure from reflection and *general rules*. We observe, that the vigour of conception, which fictions receive from poetry and eloquence, is a circumstance merely accidental, of which every idea is equally susceptible; and that such  
fictions

fictions are connected with nothing that is real. This observation makes us only lend ourselves, so to speak, to the fiction: But causes the idea to feel very different from the eternal establish'd persuasions founded on memory and custom. They are somewhat of the same kind: But the one is much inferior to the other, both in its causes and effects.

A LIKE reflection on *general rules* keeps us from augmenting our belief upon every encrease of the force and vivacity of our ideas. Where an opinion admits of no doubt, or opposite probability, we attribute to it a full conviction; tho' the want of resemblance, or contiguity, may render its force inferior to that of other opinions. 'Tis thus the understanding corrects the appearances of the senses, and makes us imagine, that an object at twenty foot distance seems even to the eye as large as one of the same dimensions at ten.

*To be inserted in Vol. I. page 282. line ult.  
after these words (any idea of power.) be-  
ginning a new paragraph.*

SOME have asserted, that we feel an energy, or power, in our own mind; and that

that having in this manner acquir'd the idea of power, we transfer that quality to matter, where we are not able immediately to discover it. The motions of our body, and the thoughts and sentiments of our mind, (say they) obey the will; nor do we seek any farther to acquire a just notion of force or power. But to convince us how fallacious this reasoning is, we need only consider, that the will being here consider'd as a cause, has no more a discoverable connexion with its effects, than any material cause has with its proper effect. So far from perceiving the connexion betwixt an act of volition, and a motion of the body; 'tis allow'd that no effect is more inexplicable from the powers and essence of thought and matter. Nor is the empire of the will over our mind more intelligible. The effect is there distinguishable and separable from the cause, and cou'd not be foreseen without the experience of their constant conjunction. We have command over our mind to a certain degree, but beyond *that* lose all empire over it: And 'tis evidently impossible to fix any precise bounds to our authority, where we consult not experience. In short, the actions of the mind are, in this respect, the same with those of matter. We perceive only their constant conjunction; nor  
I can



can we ever reason beyond it. No internal impression has an apparent energy, more than external objects have. Since, therefore, matter is confess'd by philosophers to operate by an unknown force, we shou'd in vain hope to attain an idea of force by consulting our own minds<sup>a</sup>.

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I HAD entertain'd some hopes, that however deficient our theory of the intellectual world might be, it wou'd be free from those contradictions, and absurdities, which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the material world. But upon a more strict review of the section concerning *personal identity*, I find myself involv'd in such a labyrinth, that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent. If this be not a good *general* reason for scepticism, 'tis at least a sufficient one (if I were not already abundantly supplied) for me to entertain a diffidence and modesty in all

<sup>a</sup> The same imperfection attends our ideas of the Deity; but this can have no effect either on religion or morals. The order of the universe proves an omnipotent mind; that is, a mind whose will is *constantly attended* with the obedience of every creature and being. Nothing more is requisite to give a foundation to all the articles of religion, nor is it necessary we shou'd form a distinct idea of the force and energy of the supreme Being.

all my decisions. I shall propose the arguments on both sides, beginning with those that induc'd me to deny the strict and proper identity and simplicity of a self or thinking being.

WHEN we talk of *self* or *substance*, we must have an idea annex'd to these terms, otherwise they are altogether unintelligible. Every idea is deriv'd from preceding impressions; and we have no impression of self or substance, as something simple and individual. We have, therefore, no idea of them in that sense.

WHATEVER is distinct, is distinguishable; and whatever is distinguishable, is separable by the thought or imagination. All perceptions are distinct. They are, therefore, distinguishable, and separable, and may be conceiv'd as separately existent, and may exist separately, without any contradiction or absurdity.

WHEN I view this table and that chimney, nothing is present to me but particular perceptions, which are of a like nature with all the other perceptions. This is the doctrine of philosophers. But this table, which is present to me, and that chimney, may and do exist separately. This is the doctrine of the vulgar, and implies no contradiction. There is no contradiction, therefore,

therefore, in extending the same doctrine to all the perceptions.

IN general, the following reasoning seems satisfactory. All ideas are borrow'd from preceding perceptions. Our ideas of objects, therefore, are deriv'd from that source. Consequently no proposition can be intelligible or consistent with regard to objects, which is not so with regard to perceptions. But 'tis intelligible and consistent to say, that objects exist distinct and independent, without any common *simple* substance or subject of inhesion. This proposition, therefore, can never be absurd with regard to perceptions.

WHEN I turn my reflection on *myself*, I never can perceive this *self* without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. 'Tis the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self.

WE can conceive a thinking being to have either many or few perceptions. Suppose the mind to be reduc'd even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it to have only one perception, as of thirst or hunger. Consider it in that situation. Do you conceive any thing but merely that perception? Have you any notion of *self* or *substance*? If not, the addition



addition of other perceptions can never give you that notion.

THE annihilation, which some people suppose to follow upon death, and which entirely destroys this self, is nothing but an extinction of all particular perceptions; love and hatred, pain and pleasure, thought and sensation. These therefore must be the same with self; since the one cannot survive the other.

Is *self* the same with *substance*? If it be, how can that question have place, concerning the subsistence of self, under a change of substance? If they be distinct, what is the difference betwixt them? For my part, I have a notion of neither, when conceiv'd distinct from particular perceptions.

PHILOSOPHERS begin to be reconcil'd to the principle, *that we have no idea of external substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities.* This must pave the way for a like principle with regard to the mind, *that we have no notion of it, distinct from the particular perception.*

So far I seem to be attended with sufficient evidence. But having thus loosen'd all our particular perceptions, when <sup>a</sup> I proceed to explain the principle of connexion, which binds

<sup>a</sup> Vol. I. page 452.

binds them together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings cou'd have induc'd me to receive it. If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only *feel* a connexion or determination of the thought, to pass from one object to another. It follows, therefore, that the thought alone finds personal identity, when reflecting on the train of past perceptions, that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other. However extraordinary this conclusion may seem, it need not surprize us. Most philosophers seem inclin'd to think, that personal identity *arises* from consciousness; and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy, therefore, has so far a promising aspect. But all my hopes vanish, when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head,

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IN short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz. *that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences.* Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there wou'd be no difficulty in the case. For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess, that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I pretend not, however, to pronounce it absolutely insuperable. Others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflections, may discover some hypothesis, that will reconcile those contradictions.

I SHALL also take this opportunity of confessing two other errors of less importance, which more mature reflection has discover'd to me in my reasoning. The first may be found in Vol. I. page 107. where I say, that the distance betwixt two bodies is known, among other things, by the angles, which the rays of light flowing from the bodies make with each other. 'Tis certain, that these angles are not known to the mind, and consequently can never discover the



distance. The second error may be found in Vol. I. page 171. where I say, that two ideas of the same object can only be different by their different degrees of force and vivacity. I believe there are other differences among ideas, which cannot properly be comprehended under these terms. Had I said, that two ideas of the same object can only be different by their different *feeling*, I shou'd have been nearer the truth.

THERE are two errors of the press, which affect the sense, and therefore the reader is desir'd to correct them. In Vol. I. page 332. line penult. for *as the perception* read *a perception*. In Vol. I. p. 447. line 5. for *moral* read *natural*.

*A note to Vol. I. page 43. line 11. to the word (resemblance.)*

'Tis evident, that even different simple ideas may have a similarity or resemblance to each other; nor is it necessary, that the point or circumstance of resemblance shou'd be distinct or separable from that in which they differ. *Blue* and *green* are different simple ideas, but are more resembling than *blue* and *scarlet*; tho' their perfect simplicity excludes all possibility of separation or distinction.

distinction. 'Tis the same case with particular sounds, and tastes and smells. These admit of infinite resemblances upon the general appearance and comparison, without having any common circumstance the same. And of this we may be certain, even from the very abstract terms *simple idea*. They comprehend all simple ideas under them. These resemble each other in their simplicity. And yet from their very nature, which excludes all composition, this circumstance, in which they resemble, is not distinguishable nor separable from the rest. 'Tis the same case with all the degrees in any quality. They are all resembling, and yet the quality, in any individual, is not distinct from the degree.

*To be inserted in Vol. I. page 88. line 19.  
after these words (of the present difficulty.)  
beginning a new paragraph.*

THERE are many philosophers, who refuse to assign any standard of *equality*, but assert, that 'tis sufficient to present two objects, that are equal, in order to give us a just notion of this proportion. All definitions, say they, are fruitless, without the perception of such objects; and where we

perceive such objects, we no longer stand in need of any definition. To this reasoning I entirely agree; and assert, that the only useful notion of equality, or inequality, is deriv'd from the whole united appearance and the comparison of particular objects. For 'tis evident that the eye, &c.

*To be inserted in Vol. I. page 97. line 22.  
after these words (practicable or imaginable) beginning a new paragraph.*

To whatever side mathematicians turn, this dilemma still meets them. If they judge of equality, or any other proportion, by the accurate and exact standard, viz. the enumeration of the minute indivisible parts, they both employ a standard, which is useless in practice, and actually establish the indivisibility of extension, which they endeavour to explode. Or if they employ, as is usual, the inaccurate standard, deriv'd from a comparison of objects, upon their general appearance, corrected by measuring and juxtaposition; their first principles, tho' certain and infallible, are too coarse to afford any such subtle inferences as they commonly draw from them. The first principles are founded on the imagination and senses: The  
conclusion,



conclusion, therefore, can never go beyond,  
much less contradict these faculties.

*A note to Vol. I. page 118. line 8. to these  
words (impressions and ideas.)*

As long as we confine our speculations to  
*the appearances* of objects to our senses, with-  
out entering into disquisitions concerning their  
real nature and operations, we are safe from  
all difficulties, and can never be embarrass'd  
by any question. Thus, if it be ask'd, *if the*  
invisible and intangible distance, interpos'd  
betwixt two objects, be something or no-  
thing: 'Tis easy to answer, that it is *some-*  
*thing*, viz. a property of the objects, which  
affect the *senses* after such a particular man-  
ner. If it be ask'd, whether two objects,  
having such a distance betwixt them, touch  
or not: It may be answer'd, that this de-  
pends upon the definition of the word, *touch*.  
If objects be said to touch, when there is  
nothing *sensible* interpos'd betwixt them,  
these objects touch. If objects be said to  
touch, when their *images* strike contiguous  
parts of the eye, and when the hand *feels*  
both objects successively, without any inter-  
pos'd motion, these objects do not touch.  
The appearances of objects to our senses are  
all

*whether*

all consistent; and no difficulties can ever arise, but from the obscurity of the terms we make use of.

If we carry our enquiry beyond the appearances of objects to the senses, I am afraid, that most of our conclusions will be full of scepticism and uncertainty. Thus if it be ask'd, whether or not the invisible and intangible distance be always full of *body*, or of something that by an improvement of our organs might become visible or tangible, I must acknowledge, that I find no very decisive arguments on either side; tho' I am inclin'd to the contrary opinion, as being more suitable to vulgar and popular notions. If *the Newtonian* philosophy be rightly understood, it will be found to mean no more. A vacuum is asserted: That is, bodies are said to be plac'd after such a manner, as to receive bodies betwixt them, without impulsion or penetration. The real nature of this position of bodies is unknown. We are only acquainted with its effects on the senses, and its power of receiving body. Nothing is more suitable to that philosophy, than a modest scepticism to a certain degree, and a fair confession of ignorance in subjects, that exceed all human capacity.



